THE LIFE OF WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE



MR. GLADSTONE AT THE AGE OF THIRTY-FIVE.

(From a drawing by G. Richmond, R.A.)

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WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

BY

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PREFACE.

THIS little book is an expansion of the article which I wrote for the "Dictionary of National Biography." Or rather, to be chronologically accurate, the article in the Dictionary was an abridgment of this book. Mr. Sidney Lee, not only brief himself, but the cause that brevity is in other men, was on this occasion most generous in the allotment of space. But the career of Mr. Gladstone, which was almost beyond example crowded with events, caused me to pass the bounds, and the article was reduced to about one-third of its original size. Messrs. Smith, Elder, and Co. were then good enough to suggest that it should appear as it originally stood in a volume of its own. They considered that it might be useful as a work of reference for politicians or students of history. It is a dry, unadorned narrative of facts with their appropriate dates, and has no claim to be a formal life of Mr. Gladstone. I have made use only of sources open to the public, and of facts within my own recollection or knowledge. The materials at the disposal of Mr. Gladstone's family

are in the hands of Mr. Morley, whose forthcoming Memoir is expected with such eager interest.

Although I have concealed neither my personal admiration for Mr. Gladstone, nor my general agreement with his policy at home and abroad, I have abstained from expressing and, so far as was possible, from implying any opinions of my own. It has been my object to tell the story from Mr. Gladstone's own point of view, explaining rather than criticizing, but not without reference to contemporary criticism on the one hand, and to the verdict of events on the other.

My personal acquaintance with Mr. Gladstone was slight, and confined to his old age. But he was several times good enough to favour me with reminiscences of much interest and value. Though I made no note of them, it is difficult to forget what Mr. Gladstone said. I have not hesitated to avail myself of them so far, and so far only, as they threw light upon historic incidents whose main features were already known.

Mr. Gladstone's theological tenets and ecclesiastical leanings have been indicated with severe brevity. This is mainly a record of his political doings, which include his political sayings. While pointing out the earnestness and consistency of his Churchmanship, I have not otherwise dealt with it, except where it was connected with public affairs. The effect of the Gorham case upon his mind could hardly be passed over in complete silence; for although it led to no definite act on his

part, I believe it to have confirmed him in his growing conviction that the patronage of the State was injurious to the Church.

Mr. Gladstone's career is a curious and probably a singular instance of mental development. Although, when Macaulay described him as a stern and unbending Tory, he was really a Canningite, he entered public life as an opponent of the Reform Bill, a supporter of ecclesiastical establishments, and an enemy of all organic change. Most men become more Conservative as they grow older. With Mr. Gladstone, as with Sir Robert Peel, the reverse was the case. For the last four years of his life Peel was a Liberal in the modern sense of the term. Had he lived to be eighty he might have been a Radical and a Democrat, for he had grown to hate the Tories as much as they hated him. But he died at sixty-two, and the Peelites gradually melted away. Mr. Gladstone was by far the most distinguished of them. He was Peel's pupil in politics and finance. In ecclesiastical questions he went his own way, which certainly was not Peel's. Peel was a worldly, political Churchman. Gladstone's sympathies were with the advanced section of the High Church, and those who knew him superficially believed that he would become a Roman Catholic. As a matter of fact, he was always loyal to the Church of England, as loyal as Pusey or Keble, though he would have liked to set her free from the trammels of Erastianism. His ecclesiastical

principles coloured his public action, and led him into those scholastic subtleties which had such an irritating effect upon men of the world. He was quite unaffected by Darwinian speculations or modern thought. Of physical science he knew little or nothing, and for philosophy, except Bishop Butler's, he had no taste. It was not through any change of intellectual conviction that he became a Liberal. Mr. Gladstone was, before all things practical. He always wanted to be doing something, and was impatient of restraint or delay. The first Cabinet in which he sat—Peel's—was perhaps the most efficient and businesslike of the last century. Next to it was the Cabinet over which he presided himself from 1868 to 1874.

Peel broke up Toryism, at least for the time, and founded Conservatism. But Conservatism was only the negative side of his creed. He believed in steady and gradual progress. Although his will was strong and his temper stiff, his mind was flexible, and he was always open to argument if the argument was of a practical kind. Such a book as Gladstone's "Church and State" was to him "stuff." No good could come of it; it had no relation with the realities of public life. Gladstone himself came to see that this was so. His ideal community, which was really a theocracy, had no more chance of being embodied in England than Plato's Republic had. Gladstone was not the man to waste labour and energy in pursuing the unattainable. His

book, as he said, made no disciples. It was born out of due time. He voted for the endowment, or rather the increased endowment, of Maynooth, because Roman Catholicism was the religion of Ireland. On the same occasion he formally abandoned the principles of "Church and State." From and after the year 1845 he was at heart a Voluntaryist, and when he came to disestablish the Irish Church he had no scruples to overcome. Within that quarter of a century he had swung slowly round from the party of stagnation to the party of change. Free Trade was the schoolmaster that brought Peel to Liberalism. With Gladstone it was rather the failure of his own early beliefs when applied to the business of government. At the bottom of many active and powerful minds there is a feeling that if you cannot get what you want, you may do anything you like. Mr. Gladstone, as a Christian and a moralist, would have disavowed such a doctrine. But it is nevertheless true that he was started on the path which led him to the leadership of the Liberal party by discovering the impossibility of a dogmatic and authoritative State Church.

It is notorious that long after Peel's death Mr. Gladstone received overtures from the Conservatives. Even in 1858 Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli did not despair of him. Even in 1859 he voted against the whole Liberal party in favour of Lord Derby's Administration. Immediately afterwards, for reasons fully considered in

their proper place, he joined the Government which succeeded Lord Derby's, and became Lord Palmerston's Chancellor of the Exchequer. Thereupon he left the Carlton Club, and the Conservatives gave him up for lost. Nevertheless, when he led the House of Commons after Lord Palmerston's death in the Government of Lord Russell, he gave great offence to academic Liberals by opposing the removal of University tests. This was the last remnant of the old Adam, and in 1871 he carried the abolition of the tests himself. Palmerston's death followed by a few months the loss of Gladstone's seat for Oxford, and with these two events he may be said to have acquired complete political freedom. After Peel's death he had set himself to carry out the financial policy of his master, and his task was not frustrated, though it was interrupted, by the Crimean War. The Budgets of 1860 and 1861 were the logical sequel to the Budget of 1853. Palmerston did not interfere with Gladstone's Budgets, much as he disliked some of them, but he suppressed Parliamentary Reform. To that subject, and to Irish legislation, most of Mr. Gladstone's remaining years were devoted. He was, in truth, more of a Democrat than a Liberal. When he asked whether the working classes were not our flesh and blood, he was really stating by implication the doctrine of a natural right to the franchise. "Vox populi, vox Dei," was a maxim to which he more and more inclined, though he never hesitated to oppose a temporary majority when

he thought it in the wrong. If five-sixths of the Irish people demanded Home Rule, that was presumptive evidence that Home Rule was right. Of course the presumption might be rebutted, as by showing that Home Rule destroyed the integrity of the United Kingdom, which Mr. Gladstone always denied that it did. But the will of the people constitutionally expressed was regarded by him as something almost sacred. On the other hand, he did not like admitting that he had been wrong, though he sometimes made the admission. He was too fond of proving his own consistency, and would seldom say simply that he had changed his mind. Few politicians will. It is always, according to them, circumstances that have changed, not they. Small weaknesses appear large when they are exhibited by great men. Readers of these pages can judge for themselves how far Mr. Gladstone's career remains at the close

"Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet."

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LIFE OF W. E. GLADSTONE.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE AND EDUCATION.

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE was born December 29, 1809, at 62 Rodney Street, Liverpool. His father, John Gladstone, afterwards Sir John, one of the very few baronets created by Sir Robert Peel, was a native of Leith, whence he removed to Liverpool. He married as his second wife Anne, daughter of Andrew Robertson of Stornoway, and died in 1851. They had six children, of whom William Ewart was the third son. Thus, as Mr. Gladstone said when he became member for Midlothian, he had no drop of blood in his veins which was not Scotch. The name of the family, originally settled at Liberton in Lanarkshire, had been Gledstanes, afterwards Gladstones, finally, by Royal Licence in 1835, Gladstone.

William Gladstone was educated at Seaforth Vicarage (four miles from Liverpool), at Eton, and at Oxford. His tutor at Seaforth was the Rev. William Rawson, the incumbent. His father was then living at Seaforth House. He went to Eton at the age of eleven, after the summer holidays of 1821, and boarded at a dame's (Mrs. Schurey's); Dr. Keate was then Headmaster. His tutor was the Rev. Henry Hartopp Napp. He became fag to his eldest brother Thomas, afterwards Sir Thomas Gladstone of Fasque.

The range of studies at Eton in those days was extremely narrow, being almost confined to the Greek and Latin languages. Mr. Gladstone was accustomed to say in later years that, limited as the teaching was, its accuracy was "simply splendid." There were boys, he added, who went through the school and learned nothing. But it was impossible to learn anything inaccurately. Gladstone was an industrious boy—what is called at Eton a "sap." He was distinguished even in those days for his high moral and religious character. Bishop Hamilton's statement that at Eton he himself was thoroughly idle, but "was saved from some worse things by getting to know Gladstone," has been often quoted. When a coarse toast was drunk at an "Election" dinner young Gladstone turned down his glass.

His most intimate friend at Eton was Arthur Hallam, the subject of "In Memoriam," about whose wonderful promise Gladstone entirely agreed with Tennyson. The two boys boarded in different houses, but for some years they "messed" together at breakfast every morning, turn and turn about. Of Gladstone's other contemporaries the most famous were Sir George Cornewall Lewis, who succeeded him as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1855, and Charles Canning, son of the Prime Minister, afterwards Earl Canning, Governor-General of India at the time of the Mutiny. Gladstone played cricket and football, but his favourite recreation was boating. He kept a "lock-up" or private boat, and was, as he continued to be almost throughout his life, a great walker. He made no particular mark in the school, though the few who knew him well always believed that he would rise to eminence.

The fact is, as Mr. Milnes Gaskell's privately printed correspondence of his father shows, that Gladstone and his cleverest contemporaries were in one respect premature men. They were ardent politicians, studying Parliamentary debates, writing about them to each other in the holidays, and even keeping such division lists as they could get hold of. Gladstone began early to use both his tongue and his pen. He spoke frequently in "Pop," the

school debating society; and he edited the *Eton Miscellany*, which, however, only lasted from June to December 1827. Current politics were then forbidden in "Pop," but historical subjects and abstract questions afforded ample scope for eloquence. Gladstone's first speech was delivered on October 15, 1825, when he supported the modest proposal that education was "on the whole" good for the poor. After the death of George Canning in August 1827, Gladstone wrote a fervent eulogy of him in the *Eton Miscellany*. This was the first of many tributes to Canning from the same source. Gladstone, as he told the House of Commons in 1866, "was brought up under the shadow of the great name of Mr. Canning." His father had induced Canning to stand for Liverpool in 1812, and the crowd at that election was the first thing Gladstone could remember. When he went from Eton to Oxford he was a Canningite in politics, and a Canningite in foreign politics he always remained.

Gladstone left Eton at Christmas 1827, and read for six months with a private tutor, Mr. Turner, afterwards Bishop Turner of Calcutta. In October 1828 he took up his residence at Christ Church, of which he was nominated a student in 1829. Dr. Samuel Smith and afterwards Dr. Gaisford were Deans. Among the undergraduates were Charles

Canning, Lord Lincoln, Henry George Liddell (afterwards Dean), Sir Francis Doyle, and Sir Thomas Acland, who died a few days after Mr. Gladstone, his friend for nearly seventy years. The Oxford Movement, in which Gladstone was so much interested, had not yet begun. Keble was not resident; Newman was still an Evangelical; Pusey was suspected of sympathy with German Rationalism. For the greater part of his time Gladstone "kept" in Peckwater, near Canterbury Gate. He read hard, was abstemious in the use of wine, and maintained in every respect the high character he had gained at Eton. His college tutor was the Rev. Robert Brisco; but he studied the classics privately with Charles Wordsworth, afterwards Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrews. His only exercise was walking. At Oxford, as well as through life, he was extremely and, as men of the world thought, ostentatiously religious. He founded an essay society, which was called after him "W. E. G." He was first secretary and then president of the Oxford Union. Like a good Canningite, he defended Catholic Emancipation, but denounced the Reform Bill. His speech against the Bill excited the most enthusiastic admiration, and led Charles Wordsworth to predict with confidence that he would be Prime Minister. It ob-

tained notoriety many years afterwards, when Mr. Disraeli was not ashamed to quote it in the debate on the second reading of the Reform Bill of 1866. Along with Charles Wordsworth and Lord Lincoln, Gladstone promoted a petition to the House of Commons against Parliamentary Reform. This was signed by more than seven hundred undergraduates, and presented on July 1, 1831, by Lord Mahon the historian, afterwards Lord Stanhope. In December 1831 Gladstone took a double first in classics and mathematics. His mathematics he must have learned at Oxford or at home; it was impossible for him to learn them at Eton.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY LIFE IN PARLIAMENT.

AFTER leaving Oxford in the spring of 1832, Gladstone spent six months in Italy, and acquired a familiarity with the Italian language which he never afterwards lost. His command of Italian was indeed, by the judgment of Italians, perfect; and when he visited the Ionian Islands as Lord High Commissioner in 1858 he addressed the Senate at Corfu in the Italian tongue. It appears that he had some thoughts of taking holy orders. But his father was bent upon making him into a statesman, and had interest with Sir Robert Peel. Sir John Gladstone was not a man to be trifled with, and in December 1832 he had the satisfaction of seeing his brilliant son returned to the first Reformed Parliament as one of the members for Newark. Newark was a nomination borough which the Reform Act had spared, and the patron was the Duke of Newcastle, father of Gladstone's friend Lord Lincoln. Gladstone was

elected at the head of the poll, and the Whig candidate, Serjeant Wilde, afterwards Lord Chancellor Truro, was defeated. On January 25, 1833, Gladstone was admitted a student of Lincoln's Inn; but, like Disraeli, who went through the same process, he was never called to the Bar. On January 29 Parliament met, with Lord Althorp as Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons. Gladstone sat among the Tory Opposition, which was led by Sir Robert Peel. On March 6 he was elected a member of the Carlton Club, from which he did not withdraw till March 1860, after he had definitely joined the Liberal Party and become Chancellor of the Exchequer in the second Administration of Lord Palmerston. Except for a few unimportant remarks on petitions from Newark and Edinburgh, Gladstone's maiden speech was delivered on June 3. It was a defence of his father, who had a plantation in Demerara, where, according to Lord Howick, afterwards third Earl Grey, there was undue mortality among the slaves. This Gladstone strenuously denied, declaring that his father's slaves were happy, healthy, and contented. He favoured "gradual" emancipation, with full compensation to the owners. This speech was remembered, and used against Gladstone when, in 1862,

he expressed sympathy with Jefferson Davis and the South. But he never supported the principle of slavery. The speech made a most favourable impression upon both sides of the House, and received a high compliment from Mr. Secretary Stanley, afterwards fourteenth Earl of Derby. A previous speech on the same subject (May 17), which has been erroneously attributed to Gladstone, was really made by his brother Thomas, then member for Portarlington. Except for the great session of 1846, when he was a Secretary of State without a seat in Parliament, and the first session of 1847, Gladstone sat continuously in the House of Commons from 1833 till his final retirement in 1894. His speeches were innumerable, and it is utterly impossible, within the compass of a volume like this, to notice more than a few of them.

His speech on the Irish Church Temporalities Bill (July 8, 1833) is interesting, both as the first which he made on Ireland and as the beginning of his connection with the subject of ecclesiastical establishment. He denounced the Appropriation Clause, which diverted part of the revenues of the Irish Church to secular purposes. The Appropriation Clause was withdrawn, and the Bill, thus lightened or weakened, passed the House of Lords.

Such was the first utterance on Irish ecclesias-

tical matters of the statesman who disestablished the Irish Church. On July 28, 1834, after Lord Grey had retired and had been succeeded as Prime Minister by Lord Melbourne, Gladstone vehemently opposed the third reading, moved by Joseph Hume, of a Bill for admitting Dissenters to the Universities. The third reading was supported by Lord Palmerston, then Foreign Secretary, and carried; but the Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords. Gladstone pointed out, among other things, that it would be inoperative, because it only applied to the Universities and not to the Colleges. There were then no unattached students. It was not till 1871 that the last disabilities, in the shape of Tests, were removed from Dissenters at the Universities by a Government of which Gladstone was the head.

On November 14, 1834, William IV. dismissed Lord Melbourne, who was not unwilling to be dismissed, on the ground that, Lord Althorp having become Lord Spencer, there was no member of the Government in the House of Commons qualified to lead the House. The King sent for the Duke of Wellington, who recommended that Sir Robert Peel should be asked to form a Government. A message was accordingly sent to Peel, who was then in Rome,

and on December 9 he arrived in London. On December 29 Peel was gazetted First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gladstone being included in the same commission as Junior Lord. He had refused to be Under-Secretary for War and the Colonies because of his father's connection with the West Indies. His appointment having vacated his seat, he at once issued an address to the Electors of Newark, in which he condemned the late Ministers for rash, violent, and indefinite innovation, and for having promised to act on the principles of Radicalism. He especially denounced the Ballot, which, thirty-eight years later, he carried into law. On December 29 Parliament had been dissolved for the third time within the short reign of the King. Mr. Gladstone was re-elected for Newark without opposition, his colleague being Serjeant Wilde, a Whig. Before his constituents he defended the King's dismissal of Melbourne, for which Peel had become constitutionally responsible, but which he himself deprecated when, in 1875, he reviewed Sir Theodore Martin's "Life of the Prince Consort." On January 17, 1835, Gladstone for the first time met Disraeli at a dinner given by Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst, but nothing came of the meeting. On January 19 Mr. Stuart Wortley, Under-Secretary

for War and the Colonies, was defeated in Forfarshire, and at once resigned. The post was again offered to Gladstone, who this time accepted it. The Secretary of State was Lord Aberdeen, and this was Gladstone's first introduction to a statesman whom he ever afterwards regarded with the highest reverence and esteem. His final judgment of Lord Aberdeen's character is contained in a letter of great interest and singular eloquence, which Lord Stanmore has printed in his "Life" of his father.

Of Gladstone as Under-Secretary for the Colonies two judgments delivered within the office are recorded. Sir Henry Taylor wrote: "I rather like Gladstone; but he is said to have more of the devil in him than appears—in a virtuous way, that is—only self-willed." Sir James Stephen, on the other hand, pronounced that for success in political life he wanted pugnacity. Peel's first Government had a short and troubled career. It never, indeed, had a constitutional right to exist at all. The Dissolution, unwarrantable as in the circumstances it was, resulted in the gain of many seats to the Tory Party; but it did not give them a majority in the House of Commons. Before the King's Speech was delivered they were defeated on the choice of a Speaker—Mr. Abercromby being elected in the place of Sir Charles Manners-Sutton. A

hostile amendment was carried to the Address, but still the Government did not resign. On March 30, however, Lord John Russell moved a resolution in favour of applying the surplus revenues from the Irish Church to the purposes of secular education. This was carried against Ministers by a majority of thirty-three, and on April 8, after three defeats on the Irish Tithe Bill, Peel resigned. Lord Melbourne returned to office with Lord John Russell, whom the King had declared incompetent, as leader of the House of Commons. The consequence of his Majesty's rashness was that the Whigs came back not as his servants, but as his masters. Gladstone, of course, followed Peel into Opposition. His real official career did not begin till 1841.

At this time Gladstone lived in chambers in the Albany. He then began the practice of giving breakfast-parties, which he continued when he was Prime Minister. He went a good deal into society, especially to musical parties, where he often sang; and rode regularly in the Park. But he was a born student, and the amount of reading which he accomplished in those days was prodigious. Homer and Dante were his favourite authors, but it is recorded that at this period he read the whole of St. Augustine's works in twenty-two volumes octavo.

In Gladstone's first speech to his constituents after leaving office (June 11, 1835) he bitterly attacked O'Connell, to whose memory more than fifty years afterwards he made ample amends in his review of the Irish patriot's published correspondence. On August 21, in the House of Commons, he defended the co-ordinate authority of the Lords in matters of legislation, and denounced the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Spring-Rice, for, as he put it, threatening to coerce them by postponing the Consolidated Fund Bill. In 1860 their positions were exactly reversed. Mr. Gladstone, then himself Chancellor of the Exchequer, denied, and Mr. Spring-Rice, who had become Lord Monteagle, asserted, the moral right of the Lords to throw out a Bill which repealed a tax. Gladstone's mother died on September 23, 1835, and for the remainder of the year he took no active part in politics. His next important appearance in public was at the great political dinner given to Sir Robert Peel in Glasgow on January 13, 1837. Upon that occasion he once more attacked the "reckless wickedness" of O'Connell. Speaking at Newark on his way south on January 17, he said that the great distinction of the day was not between Whig and Tory, but between Conservative and Destructive, and that the time had come for

a union of men to support the Church, the monarchy, and the peerage. In the House of Commons on March 15 he spoke in support of compulsory church rates, which he abolished in 1868, when he was in power, though not in office. On July 17 he opposed a return demanded by Hume of those to whom compensation had been granted for the loss of slaves in the West Indies. The opposition, however, was withdrawn, and when the return appeared, it showed that Gladstone's father had received more than £75,000. Whatever else may be thought of Gladstone's early speeches on slavery, they at least proved his moral courage.

At the dissolution of 1837, consequent upon the death of William IV., Gladstone was again returned without a contest for Newark, and again in the company of his Whig colleague, Serjeant Wilde. He was invited, but declined, to stand for Manchester. The Manchester Tories, however, persisted in nominating him, but he was placed at the bottom of the poll. In December 1838 appeared Gladstone's once famous book, "The State in its Relations with the Church." He was assisted in writing it by his friend James Hope, afterwards Mr. Hope-Scott, Q.C., then a Tractarian, who subsequently joined the Church of Rome at the same time with Dr. Manning. The book is now

chiefly known through the brilliant, if rather shallow, essay which Macaulay wrote upon it in the *Edinburgh Review*. It has not, and it never had, much real interest for practical politicians; it was suggested by a series of lectures delivered by Dr. Chalmers in the Hanover Square Rooms. Gladstone affirms that the State has a conscience, that that conscience must be a religious one, and that it is impossible for the State, as for the individual, to have more than one religion. This is, in fact, a plea for a Theocracy—for the exact opposite of Erastianism—for the subordination of the State to the Church. As Gladstone says in his chapter of autobiography, written thirty years afterwards, his views were, even in 1838, hopelessly belated. Although the book was warmly praised, and its author's seriousness highly commended, he obtained no real support from any quarter, and within ten years he himself perceived that his position, though it might be ideal, was untenable. The historical interest of the book is that its doctrines were inconsistent with the Parliamentary grant to Maynooth College for training Roman Catholic priests in Ireland.

On April 10, 1839, Gladstone wrote to Macaulay to thank him for "the candour and single-mindedness" of his review. Macaulay sent a most cordial



[Photo by Jones

HAWARDEN CASTLE FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

acknowledgment, and Sir George Trevelyan mentions that Gladstone's was the only letter he ever preserved. Sir James Stephen described the book as one of "great dignity, majesty, and strength." But Wordsworth said that he could not distinguish its principles from Romanism; and Sir Robert Peel, who detested the Oxford Movement, is said by Lord Houghton to have exclaimed, as he turned over the pages, "That young man will ruin his fine political career if he persists in writing trash like this." In 1840 Gladstone published a second book called "Church Principles Considered in their Results." When Macaulay saw the advertisement, he wrote to the editor of the *Edinburgh Review* that the subject belonged to him. But when he got the book he declined to review it on the grounds that it was purely theological, had no connection with politics, and might have been written by a supporter of the Voluntary system. It is, indeed, an ecclesiastical treatise, stating the views of a strong High Churchman on the apostolical succession, the authority of the Church in matters of faith, and the nature of the Sacrament. It had a very small circulation, and is chiefly interesting as a curious example of the way in which an active young member of Parliament employed his leisure. On June 20, when Lord John Russell proposed an

increase of the meagre grant then made by the State for education, raising it from £26,300 to £30,000, Gladstone delivered an elaborate speech on a subject which he pronounced to be connected with the deep and abstruse principles of religion. He condemned the Ministerial plan because it recognized the equality of all religions, arguing that it led to latitudinarianism and atheism. His own opinion was in favour of Denominational teaching, and this opinion it may be doubted whether he ever changed.

On July 25, 1839, Gladstone was married at Hawarden to Catherine, elder daughter of Sir Stephen Glynne. On the same day and at the same place Sir Stephen's younger daughter Mary was married to George, fourth Lord Lyttelton; and it was in memory of this occasion that Gladstone and Lyttelton, more than twenty years afterwards, published their joint volume of poetical translations. In April 1840 they examined together at Eton for the Newcastle Scholarship, which had been lately founded at Eton by Gladstone's political patron, the Duke of Newcastle.

Meanwhile the Whig Government was tottering to its fall, and Gladstone's friends began to anticipate his early appointment to high office. He had risen to a position of considerable influence in the House

of Commons, and so early as January 30, 1838, when it was proposed by George Grote, the historian, that Mr. Roebuck should be heard at the Bar as agent for the Assembly of Lower Canada against the Canada Bill, Gladstone relieved the House from a difficulty by suggesting that Roebuck should be heard, but not as agent. This was universally approved and unanimously adopted. Gladstone argued that the Canadians had no real grievances to justify a rebellion; but that it was impossible to retain possession of a British Colony without the free consent of the inhabitants. On April 9, 1839, he spoke against the Government Bill suspending the Constitution of Jamaica for five years. The motion for going into Committee on this Bill was only carried by five votes, and Lord Melbourne resigned. What is called the Bedchamber difficulty prevented Peel from forming a Government, and the Whigs returned to office; but their power was gone. At the opening of the session of 1840 Gladstone was for the first time invited to Peel's Parliamentary Dinner for the front Opposition Bench.

In the summer of 1840, Gladstone took part with James Hope and Dean Ramsay in founding Trinity College, Glenalmond, of which Charles Wordsworth was the first Warden, for the higher education of Scottish Episcopalians. At this time, as indeed

throughout his life, Gladstone was keenly interested in ecclesiastical affairs, and on April 27, 1841, he took part in the establishment of the Colonial Bishoprics' Fund. Of this fund Archbishop Howley was the first President, and Gladstone, who was always one of the Treasurers, spoke at the Jubilee meeting on May 29, 1891, when Archbishop Benson was in the chair.

In the session of 1840, Gladstone took a prominent part in opposition to the first Opium War with China. In doing so he separated himself from many members of his party; but to the policy he then avowed he always consistently adhered. He denounced in the strongest language what he called the infamous contraband traffic in opium, and he asserted in the most uncompromising manner the right of the Chinese Government to resist the importation of the drug by force. For the first time he drew upon himself serious obloquy by the use of words which were held to imply a justification of the Chinese for poisoning the wells. "They have given you full notice," he said, "and wish to drive you from their coast. They had a right to drive you from their coast if you persisted in carrying on this infamous and atrocious traffic. . . . You allowed your agents to aid and abet those who were concerned in carrying on that trade; I do not know

how it can be heard as a crime against the Chinese that they refused provisions to those who refused obedience to their laws while residing within their territories." He explained that he had not made himself responsible for the charge of well-poisoning, and had merely referred to it as the allegation of the Government. But the Whigs did not let the matter drop, and Palmerston in particular stigmatized him as defending a barbarous method of warfare. At the beginning of the session of 1841 Gladstone opposed a Bill enabling the Jews to hold office in Corporations. He entered into the whole subject of Jewish disabilities, and declared against the principle of admitting into the Legislature persons whose religious belief was incompatible with the duties they would have to perform. In 1885, twenty-seven years after all Jewish disabilities had been removed by Parliament, Gladstone was responsible for the creation of the first Jewish peer. In the same session the Government proposed to reduce the duty on foreign sugar. Lord Sandon, on behalf of the Opposition, moved an amendment that such a course would assist slavery and the slave trade. The debate lasted for eight nights, and Gladstone spoke in support of the amendment. He made a personal appeal to Macaulay, who was then a member of the Cabinet. "I can only speak,"

he said, "from tradition of the struggle for the abolition of slavery; but if I have not been misinformed, there was engaged in it a man who was the unseen ally of Mr. Wilberforce and the pillar of his strength—a man of profound benevolence and acute understanding, of indefatigable industry, and of that self-denying temper which is content to work in secret and to seek for its reward beyond the grave. The name of that man was Zachary Macaulay, and his son is a member of the present Administration."

Sir Robert Peel had now resolved that the time was come for a formal attack upon the Government of Lord Melbourne, and he asked the House of Commons to affirm that they had lost the confidence of Parliament. The motion was carried by a majority of one, and on June 22 Parliament was dissolved. In his address to the electors of Newark, Gladstone said: "I regard the protection of native agriculture as an object of the first national and economical importance." He accordingly favoured a graduated scale of duties upon foreign corn. On this occasion he stood with Lord John Manners, afterwards Duke of Rutland. The Whig candidate was Mr. Thomas Hobhouse. Gladstone and Manners were returned. Lord Melbourne, in accordance with what was then the unbroken practice, met the new Parliament,

although he was in a hopeless minority. But on August 20 he was defeated in the House of Commons by a majority of ninety-one, and finally retired from office. Mr. Gladstone used to say that there was no man he more regretted not to have known than Lord Melbourne.

CHAPTER III.

PEEL'S GREAT MINISTRY.

ON August 31, 1841, Sir Robert Peel offered Gladstone the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade. With this office was held the Mastership of the Mint, and Gladstone was sworn of the Privy Council, but not admitted to the Cabinet. He was disappointed with this offer though he accepted it, for he had at that time no practical knowledge of commerce, and he had hoped to be Chief Secretary for Ireland. But it was really the making of his career. Sir Robert Peel at once set himself to reform the tariff, and Gladstone was his principal assistant in the task. Gladstone's nominal chief was the Earl of Ripon; but he soon mastered the business, and became the real head of the department. Peel's second and great Administration was, in Mr. Gladstone's opinion, a model one. Peel was a real Prime Minister, superintending every department and leading the House of Commons as it

had never been led before. Though Mr. Goulburn was Chancellor of the Exchequer, Peel was the true Minister of Finance, and his two greatest Budgets he introduced himself as First Lord of the Treasury. Finance had been the weak point of the Whigs, and Peel had to meet a deficit of two millions and three-quarters. Long afterwards, when he was opposing the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield, Gladstone said that in his youth the Tories were the party of economy and peace, and the Whigs the party of extravagance and war. The Budget of 1842 first showed Peel's full powers as a financier. It was, in fact, a long step towards Free Trade, and the Duke of Buckingham resigned the office of Privy Seal on that express ground. Peel met the deficit by proposing an Income Tax, which had hitherto only been levied in time of war, at sevenpence in the pound for three years on all incomes exceeding £150. The rest of the money thus raised he devoted to abolishing or reducing the duties on no less than 750 imported articles. The labour of preparing the new tariff was enormous, and it fell almost entirely upon Gladstone's shoulders. He was in charge of the Customs Bill, and in the course of the session spoke 129 times. The main principles of this great financial reform were: that there should be no prohibition of any foreign goods;

that the duties on raw materials of manufacture should be nominal; and that where the process of manufacture was not, on importation, complete, they should be as small as possible. No work of Gladstone's life, except, perhaps, the settlement of the Succession Duty in 1853, was more arduous than this, and for a time it seriously injured his eyesight. The Budget also comprised a very considerable reduction of the duties on foreign corn, although the principle of Protection, and even the method of the sliding scale, pronounced by Lord Melbourne to be as absurd as anything in Rabelais, were retained. Lord John Russell moved an amendment in favour of a fixed duty, but he was defeated by a majority of 123.

Throughout the year 1842 industrial distress was acute, and at the opening of the session of 1843 Lord Howick moved for a committee to inquire into the causes of it. He attacked Peel's new settlement of the Corn Laws as inadequate, though he did not at that time pronounce for a final repeal. Gladstone in reply to this speech did not argue in favour of Protection on general grounds. He contented himself with the much narrower statement that the Government were not prepared to abandon the principles of the Corn Laws while Protection was applied to other articles of commerce. Again,

when Mr. Villiers, on May 16, moved that the Corn Laws should be repealed, Gladstone confined himself to the plea that it was too soon to alter the elaborate provisions of the year before. On May 11, Lord Fitzgerald, President of the Board of Control, died, and was succeeded by Lord Ripon. On May 19, Gladstone became President of the Board of Trade, and took his seat for the first time in the Cabinet. The first question on which he had to give an opinion as a Cabinet Minister was the withdrawal of the Educational Clauses in the Factory Bill. On June 13, Lord John Russell, returning to his point, again moved to substitute a fixed duty for the sliding scale. This time Gladstone energetically protested against the unsettling effect of constant proposals for change, and Lord John's motion was defeated by a majority of ninety-nine. It may be observed that Gladstone never, or hardly ever, replied to Cobden. That duty was undertaken by Peel himself till the memorable day in March 1845, when, at the close of Cobden's greatest speech, Peel, in response to the proposal of his colleagues that he should answer it, tore up his notes and said: "Those may answer it who can." Before the end of the session Gladstone took another step towards Free Trade by carrying a Bill to remove the restric-

tions which had hitherto impeded the export of machinery.

In 1844, Gladstone, as President of the Board of Trade, introduced and carried the first General Railway Bill, which was a measure of very great importance. It provided what were known as Parliamentary trains for the accommodation of the poorer classes. The fares charged for third-class passengers by these trains were not to exceed a penny a mile, the trains were to stop at every station, and the speed was not to be less than twelve miles an hour. In the same session he took a prominent part in debate on a very different subject, which had no connection with his official duties. He made an eloquent and highly interesting speech on the second reading of the Dissenters' Chapels Bill. This was a Bill introduced by the Government in consequence of legal decisions which threatened the property of Unitarian congregations in their own chapels and endowments. It had been held by the House of Lords, in their judicial capacity, that no deed of foundation could be construed to include a religious body which was not, at the time the deed had been drawn up, tolerated by law. The result of this startling judgment was to deprive Unitarians, who had long been brought within the pale of the Constitution, of the legal

rights which all other Churches enjoyed. The Bill altered the presumption of law as laid down by the Lords, and gave every congregation a Parliamentary title to religious endowments which they had held for twenty years. It was, in fact, a Bill to quiet possession, and was supported by the leading men of both parties in both Houses. But a violent agitation was raised against it out of doors by Churchmen as well as by orthodox Dissenters, and against this ignorant prejudice Gladstone directed his speech. He entered fully into the history of Nonconformity and the dislike of Nonconformists to doctrinal subscription. But at the same time he pointed out that the question was one not of theology but of justice, and that Parliament had no more right to withhold protection from the property of Unitarians than a judge would have to deprive a man of an estate because his moral character was bad. This was the first Liberal speech made by Gladstone on a subject connected with religion.

On January 28, 1845, a few days before the meeting of Parliament, Gladstone resigned office. When Parliament met he explained that his reason for doing so was the intention of the Government to propose an increased grant to Maynooth, to make the grant permanent instead of annual, and

to render the Board of Works in Ireland liable for the execution of repairs. Maynooth was a college for the education of Roman Catholic priests. The increase of the grant was from £9,000 to £39,000 a year. Gladstone felt that this policy was inconsistent with the principles of his book on Church and State, because it recognized the right and duty of the Government to support more religions than one. Most politicians regarded his reasons for resignation as altogether inadequate, and Peel did all he could to keep his valued lieutenant at the Board of Trade; but Gladstone was not to be moved, believing that his public character was at stake. Having resigned, however, he felt himself at liberty to support Peel's proposal, arguing that, as grants were made by Parliament for other religious purposes not connected with the Church of England, it was unjust to exclude the Church of the majority in Ireland. The grant to Maynooth was part of Peel's general scheme for improving University education in Ireland. He also proposed the foundation of unsectarian institutions, which Sir Robert Inglis, in a nickname that stuck, called the "godless colleges." These also Gladstone defended, on the grounds of justice to Ireland and the interests of higher education. Before he resigned Gladstone had prepared another tariff, still

further reducing the number of taxable articles imported from abroad. After his resignation he employed his leisure in writing a very important pamphlet, which he called "Remarks upon Recent Commercial Legislation." This tract is, in truth, a free-trade manifesto, and is historically connected with the great change of the succeeding year. Gladstone argues that it should be the first duty of a sound financier to encourage the growth of commerce by removing all burdens from the materials of industry. Now, corn is as much the material of loaves as cotton is the material of dresses. In the winter of this year Gladstone, while out shooting, injured the first finger of his left hand so seriously that it had to be cut off.

On December 4, 1845, the *Times* announced that the Cabinet had decided upon the total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws. The statement was indignantly denied by other newspapers, and nobody knew what to believe. But the *Times* was partly right, having indeed obtained its information from a Cabinet Minister, Lord Aberdeen. Only it omitted to state that Sir Robert Peel had resigned. He did so because the resignation of Lord Stanley had, in his opinion, fatally weakened his Government. The Queen sent for Lord John Russell, who, so lately as November 22, had informed his

constituents by letter that he was converted to total and immediate repeal. Lord John, however, failed to form a Government, because Lord Grey declined to sit in a Cabinet with Lord Palmerston as Foreign Secretary. On December 20 Sir Robert Peel resumed office, and Gladstone succeeded Lord Stanley as Secretary of State for the Colonies. His appointment vacated his seat for Newark, but he did not offer himself for re-election. The Duke of Newcastle was a staunch Protectionist, and the electors of Newark were commonly of the same opinion as the Duke. Throughout the famous and stirring session of 1846 Gladstone was a Secretary of State and a Cabinet Minister without a seat in Parliament. He did not re-enter the House of Commons till after the General Election of 1847. On June 25, 1846, the Bill for the Repeal of the Corn Laws was read a third time in the House of Lords and passed. On the same night the second reading of the Irish Coercion Bill was rejected in the House of Commons by a strange and sinister alliance of Whigs, Radicals, and Protectionists. Sir Robert Peel resigned, and Lord John Russell became Prime Minister. Cobden urged Peel to dissolve, but Peel replied that it would not be proper to go to the country on the question of exceptional laws for Ireland. He was, in fact, eager to quit

office, and he begged the Queen, as a personal favour, that she would never again entrust him with the task of forming an Administration. Gladstone of course retired with his chief, and was thus without either an office or a seat.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PEELITES.

FOR the four remaining years of his life Peel, though nominally in opposition, gave a steady support to the Whig Government of Lord John Russell. He was, in fact, a Liberal. But it was known that he would never again take office unless he thought the principle of Free Trade was in serious danger. His followers called themselves, and were called, Peelites; but they were not, in the proper sense of the term, a party. They were a group of able and high-minded men united in devotion to Peel, but agreeing only, or chiefly, in hostility to Protection. On July 23, 1847, Parliament, having sat for six years, was dissolved. Mr. Estcourt, one of the members for the University of Oxford, retired, and Gladstone was brought forward as a candidate. His opponent was Mr. Round, an extreme Tory and Protestant. Gladstone's address was mainly a defence of his vote for Maynooth, which Mr. Round opposed, but which

Mr. Estcourt had supported. Sir Robert Inglis, an opponent of the grant, who had sat for the University since he defeated Peel in 1829, was returned at the head of the poll with 1,700 votes. Gladstone came second with 997, and Round, the defeated candidate, polled 824. The Whigs obtained a majority, and remained in office. The Prime Minister's colleague in the representation of London was Baron Rothschild, who, though not legally ineligible, was unable, as a Jew, to take the Parliamentary oath "on the true faith of a Christian." Lord John Russell moved a resolution that these words ought to be omitted, and Gladstone supported him. Alluding to his previous vote against the admission of Jews to municipal office, he repeated his previous argument that if they were admitted to corporations, as they had since been, it was illogical to exclude them from Parliament. The resolution was carried, but the necessary legislation was not introduced that year, and it was eleven years before Jews were enabled to take their seats. In 1848, on the eve of the Chartist rising, Gladstone was sworn in a special constable. His most important speech that year was made in favour of a Bill which came down from the House of Lords for authorizing diplomatic relations with the Court of Rome. Peel had for some time

been in favour of this measure, which, on August 29, was read a third time, and became law at the end of the session. The year 1849 was chiefly remarkable for the repeal of the Navigation Laws, which provided that, with some exceptions, foreign goods must be imported either in British ships or in the ships of the country from which they came, and which restricted the employment of foreign sailors in the merchant service. On March 13 Gladstone gave a qualified support to this Bill, which was in thorough accordance with the principles of Free Trade, but urged, not very consistently, that its adoption should depend upon the adoption of the same policy by other States. He did not, however, press his point to a division, and the Bill—though Brougham unexpectedly opposed it in the Lords—received the Royal Assent. On the Canadian Indemnity Bill Gladstone urged that there should be no indemnity to rebels, and strongly asserted the authority of Parliament to legislate for the Colonies. He opposed the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, to which he never became reconciled. The second reading of this Bill was carried by 177 votes against 143. But on July 21 it was withdrawn, and owing to the persistent opposition of the Peers, especially the Bishops, it has not yet become law.* The principal measure of 1850 was

* The measure was passed in 1907.

Lord John Russell's Colonial Government Bill, which gave the right of self-government to many of the British Colonies. It was introduced on February 8, and Gladstone, having been Colonial Secretary, took a prominent part in the debates. He moved amendments in favour of a second chamber, and of suspending the Bill until the opinion of the colonies had been taken on it. He was unsuccessful in both instances. But there is no British colony without a second chamber now, and the Australian Federation Bill of 1900 was not submitted to Parliament until the Legislatures and the people of the Australian Colonies had expressed their approval of it. On February 19 Gladstone supported a motion brought forward by Mr. Disraeli. Disraeli proposed, as a remedy for agricultural distress, that the Poor Laws should be revised, and that the burden of the poor-rate should be transferred from real property to the Consolidated Fund. Gladstone favoured the transference of at least a part of the rate, and argued that the relief would go to the tenants rather than to the landlords. Peel was against him on both points, and Gladstone afterwards came round to Peel's opinion. The motion was defeated by a majority of twenty-one. On March 8, 1850, Lord Langdale, then Master of the Rolls, delivered judg-

ment in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on Mr. Gorham's appeal from the Court of Arches. The Dean of the Arches, Sir Herbert Jenner Fust, had held that the Bishop of Exeter, Dr. Phillpotts, was justified in refusing Mr. Gorham's institution to the benefice of Brampton Speke, which the Lord Chancellor had conferred upon him, because Mr. Gorham did not believe the doctrine of baptismal regeneration as defined by the formularies of the Church of England. The Judicial Committee, on which the two Archbishops sat, reversed this decision, and found that Mr. Gorham had not gone beyond the limits of permissible opinion in the Church. Lord Langdale's judgment was characteristically described by the great historian who heard it as worthy of Lord Somers or Chancellor d'Aguesseau. But it gave great offence to the High Church party, and it led to the secession of Dr. Manning from the Church of England. A petition against the sentence of the Court was drawn up, which Manning was the first to sign. Mr. Gladstone, whose signature had been confidently expected by Manning and Hope-Scott, drew back at the last moment on the technical plea that he was a Privy Councillor. Sidney Herbert took the same objection, and no member of the Privy Council did actually sign. Not all

the signatories, nor half of them, seceded, and no direct result followed from the protest. But it is plain that Mr. Gladstone never seriously contemplated, any more than Pusey or Keble, the act of leaving the Church in which he was baptized. The most memorable debate of 1850 began on June 24. It was memorable, not only for the brilliancy of the speeches delivered in it, of which the most brilliant was Gladstone's, but also for the fact that it was the last in which Peel took part. The subject was Lord Palmerston's quarrel with the Greek Government, who had failed to protect Don Pacifico, a Maltese Jew, but a British subject, from the violence of an Athenian mob. The British fleet, under Sir William Parker, was ordered to the Piræus, and seized a number of Greek ships to enforce compensation. A vote of censure upon this high-handed proceeding was moved and carried by Lord Stanley in the House of Lords. The majority against the Government there was thirty-seven. In the House of Commons, Mr. Roebuck moved a counter-resolution, expressing confidence in the Government, and Lord Palmerston defended himself in a speech five hours long, which lasted, as Gladstone put it, from dusk to dawn. He uttered upon that occasion the celebrated phrase, "*Civis Romanus sum*," and boasted that, wherever

a British subject might be, the watchful eye and the strong arm of England would protect him. It was undoubtedly a popular speech, though Palmerston's enemies pronounced it to be clap-trap. Gladstone, taking a less popular line, pointed out the dangers of Palmerston's policy. "What, sir," he asked, "was a Roman citizen? He was the member of a privileged class; he belonged to a conquering race—to a nation that held all others bound down by the strong arm of power. For him there was to be an exceptional system of law; for him principles were to be asserted, and by him rights were to be enjoyed, that were denied to the rest of the world. Is such the view of the noble lord as to the relation which is to subsist between England and other countries?" Such, at all events, was the view of the House of Commons, and Mr. Roebuck's motion was carried by a majority of forty-six. But before the House divided, Peel, in a brief speech of singular dignity, eloquence, and wisdom, expressed his "reluctant dissent" from the motion, and uttered his final caution against perverting diplomacy, "the great engine used by civilized society for the purpose of maintaining peace, into a cause of hostility and war." This speech was delivered on the night of June 28. On the afternoon of the 29th, Peel was thrown from

his horse on Constitution Hill, and on July 2 he died.

When the House of Commons met on July 3, the first motion stood in the name of Joseph Hume. But, instead of moving it, he proposed that the House should at once adjourn as a tribute to the memory of Sir Robert Peel. Gladstone seconded the proposal in a brief speech, full of deep feeling, in which he quoted the noble lines from "Marmion" on the death of Pitt. Macaulay was in error when he described Gladstone as "the rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories," who were inclined to rebel against the authority of Sir Robert. He was a thorough Peelite, and never thought of setting himself up as a rival to that illustrious man. Peel, he said, at the close of his own life, was upon the whole the greatest man he ever knew. After Peel's death he called no one master; but the statesman to whom he most attached himself was Lord Aberdeen. The death of their chief did not dissolve the Peelites, who continued to act and vote together on most questions, if not on all, until they coalesced with the Whigs in Lord Aberdeen's Administration.

CHAPTER V.

THE NEAPOLITAN QUESTION.

THE only other important subject on which Gladstone spoke in the session of 1850 was Mr. Heywood's proposal that a Royal Commission should be issued to inquire into the management of the Universities. Lord John Russell unexpectedly accepted Mr. Heywood's motion, which was carried by a majority of twenty-two. But Gladstone, as member for Oxford, opposed it, using the argument which afterwards became so familiar, though it ceased to weigh with him, that the interference of Parliament would discourage the generosity of founders and benefactors.

The winter of 1850–51 was spent by Gladstone at Naples, and momentous consequences followed from his visit. He discovered that Ferdinand II., King of the Two Sicilies, had not only dissolved the Constitution, but had confined some 20,000 persons as political prisoners. Nearly the whole of the late Opposition, and an actual majority of the

late Chamber, were in jail. They were herded with the worst criminals—some of them were subjected to actual torture; and the state of the prisons in which they were confined was a scandal to civilization. One statesman in particular, Poerio, was seen by Gladstone himself chained to a murderer, and suffering terrible privations, although, as Gladstone said, his character stood as high as that of Lord John Russell or Lord Lansdowne. Moved by these discoveries, Gladstone addressed a very eloquent and extremely indignant letter to Lord Aberdeen, in which he told the whole story of King Ferdinand's cruelty and atrocities from the beginning. He had not selected the most sympathetic correspondent, for Lord Aberdeen, in his foreign policy, had more in common with Metternich than with Cavour. The letter was dated April 7, 1851, but it did not actually appear till July. The delay was due to Lord Aberdeen, who earnestly entreated Gladstone to abstain from publication, on the ground that it would render more difficult the task of procuring release for these Italian patriots. Lord Aberdeen's good faith cannot be doubted, and even his judgment should not be lightly impugned; but Gladstone's moral indignation was not to be restrained, and the letter was published. It was followed by two others, in the second of which

Gladstone replied exhaustively and conclusively to the official defence put forward by the Neapolitan Government. Lord Palmerston, who on this point, and perhaps on this point only, entirely agreed with Gladstone, sent a copy of the first letter to the British representative at every Court in Europe, and told the House of Commons, in reply to Sir De Lacy Evans, that he had done so. Gladstone's letters undoubtedly contributed to the ultimate independence and union of Italy. But Lord Aberdeen was so far justified that they did not immediately procure the liberation of the captives, and it was Lord Derby's Government who procured the freedom of Poerio. At this time Gladstone took the trouble to translate the whole of Farini's "Roman State from 1815 to 1850."

Gladstone returned home towards the end of February 1851, and found himself in the middle of a political crisis. The whole country was agitated by popular fury against the Papal Bull which had divided England into Roman Catholic Sees. The public feeling was shared by no one more strongly than by the Prime Minister, and he had already introduced the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, which provided penalties for the assumption by Roman Catholic prelates of titles taken from any territory or place in the United Kingdom. But the Whig

Government was tottering to its fall. A motion by Mr. Disraeli, nominally designed to relieve agricultural distress, but really meant to bring back Protection, had been defeated by only fourteen votes, and on February 20, Mr. Locke King's proposal to reduce the county franchise to £10, at which it stood in boroughs, was carried against the Ministry by a majority of nearly two to one. Lord John Russell thereupon resigned, and a new Government was not formed till March 3. Lord Stanley, for whom the Queen sent, declined to make one until Lord John had attempted a conjunction with the Peelites. The Peelites refused to join him because they disapproved of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. Lord Stanley then tried to obey the Queen's commands, and he invoked Gladstone's assistance. He also proposed that Lord Canning, another Peelite, should enter the Cabinet. They, however, would not serve under a Protectionist, and Lord Stanley gave up the task in despair. Lord John returned to Downing Street, and proceeded with the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill in a modified form. On March 14, Gladstone made a powerful speech against the Bill, urging that it was a violation of religious freedom, and that the act of the Pope, being purely spiritual, was one with which Parliament had no concern. Public opinion, however,

was strongly the other way, and the second reading was carried by 438 votes against 95. The Bill, strengthened in committee by Tory amendments, passed both Houses and became law. But nobody obeyed it, nobody was punished for disobeying it, and twenty years afterwards it was repealed at the instance of Gladstone himself.

In the winter of 1851, Lord John Russell's Government, already weak, was still further weakened by the dismissal of Lord Palmerston, who had recognized the absolute power of Louis Napoleon without consulting the Prime Minister or the Queen. This was in December, and on February 20, 1852, Palmerston had what he characteristically called his "tit-for-tat with Lord John Russell" by turning him out on the Militia Bill, when Ministers were left in a minority of nine. Lord John again resigned, and this time Lord Stanley, who had become Lord Derby, succeeded in forming an Administration without recourse either to Whigs or to Peelites. He did, indeed, approach Lord Palmerston, but without effect. The new Government consisted almost entirely of new men, and Mr. Disraeli, who had never held office before, became Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons. The Government, though in a minority, struggled through the session, which was a short one, for

Parliament was prorogued and dissolved at the beginning of July. The result of the elections was the return of 315 Liberals (counting the Irish), 299 Conservatives, and 40 Peelites. Gladstone was re-elected for Oxford, though he was opposed by Dr. Marsham, Warden of Merton. When the new Parliament met in November, Mr. Villiers proposed several resolutions in favour of Free Trade, which threatened the existence of the Cabinet. It was generally recognized that, after the appeal to the country, Protection was dead. But Mr. Villiers invited the House of Commons formally to declare that the repeal of the Corn Laws was a "wise, just, and beneficent" measure. These "odious epithets," as Mr. Disraeli called them, gave great offence to the Conservative Party. There was a long and angry debate upon the resolution. But Lord Palmerston came to the rescue of the Government with an amendment which, though substantially identical with Mr. Villiers's proposals, omitted the offensive words. Gladstone strongly supported the amendment, on the ground that it was in accordance with the well-known magnanimity of Sir Robert Peel, and that it would give Protection a decent burial. The amendment was carried by a majority of eighty, and Lord Derby was, for the moment, safe. But it was not for long. Mr. Disraeli's first

Budget was an unfortunate one. He proposed to relieve the agricultural depression by taking off half the duty on malt, and to supply the deficiency by doubling the duty on inhabited houses. In his reply, at the close of the debate, Mr. Disraeli, turning aside from financial details, made a slashing personal attack, in his most reckless and satirical vein, upon his principal critics, especially Sir James Graham and Sir Charles Wood, afterwards Lord Halifax. He sat down late at night, and Gladstone immediately rose to reply to a speech which must, he said, be answered at the moment. This was the beginning of that long oratorical duel which only ended in Mr. Disraeli's removal to the House of Lords, nearly a quarter of a century later. The House was vehemently excited, and Gladstone's earlier sentences were interrupted by tumults of applause. He severely rebuked Mr. Disraeli for the terms in which he had spoken of eminent and distinguished men, his predecessors in office. But the bulk of his argument was entirely financial, and he condemned the Budget because, as he said, it "consecrated the principle of a deficiency." He proved that the small surplus which the Chancellor of the Exchequer estimated was not a real one, and that therefore his whole scheme was without solid foundation. On a division, which was taken in the

early morning of the 17th, the Government were left in a minority of nineteen. The same day Lord Derby went down to Osborne, and the first of his three Administrations was at an end. "England," Mr. Disraeli had said in his speech, "does not love coalitions." She was now to try one. Lord Aberdeen became Prime Minister, and constructed a mixed Cabinet of Whigs and Peelites, with one Radical, Sir William Molesworth. Gladstone became Chancellor of the Exchequer. His acceptance of office of course vacated his seat, and there was a fierce contest at Oxford, which lasted for fifteen days. Gladstone had excited the animosity of a clerical faction, led by Archdeacon Denison, who, five years before, had been one of his strongest supporters. Their candidate was Mr. Dudley Perceval, son of the Prime Minister, and Gladstone's majority was considerably reduced. At the close of the poll the numbers were—for Gladstone, 1,034; for Perceval, 885.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COALITION.

LORD ABERDEEN was well fitted to preside over a Coalition Government. In home politics he was an advanced Liberal; in foreign policy he was a pronounced Tory, who adhered, so far as it was possible, to the principles of 1815 and to the Treaty of Vienna. Lord John Russell consented to serve under him as Foreign Secretary, but he very soon resigned this office, in which Lord Clarendon succeeded him, and he led the House of Commons as President of the Council. Lord Palmerston did not then, or ever again, return to the Foreign Office, but became Home Secretary, though his principal interest then, as always, was in foreign affairs. On April 18, 1853, Gladstone introduced his first and in some respects his greatest Budget. But before he did so he had provided in a separate measure for reducing the National Debt by eleven millions and a half every year. This memorable Budget was universally admitted to be a master-

piece of financial genius, worthy of Peel or Pitt. In introducing it Mr. Gladstone spoke for five hours, though not longer than Mr. Disraeli had spoken on a similar occasion a few months before. The results, however, were very different. Disraeli's Budget had been a disastrous failure; Gladstone's was a splendid success. The leading principles of it were the progressive reduction of the Income Tax, and the extension of the Legacy Duty, under the name of Succession Duty, to real property. It was estimated to produce an annual sum of £2,000,000, but at first it brought in less than half that sum. The Income Tax was to remain at 7d. in the pound from April 1853 to April 1855. From April 1855 to April 1857 it was to stand at 6d.; from April 1857 to April 1860 it was to be 5d., after which it was to be entirely extinguished. It was extended to incomes between £100 and £150, but on them it was at once to be calculated at 5d. in the pound. It was also, for the first time, to be imposed in Ireland. On the other hand, and as a set-off, the debt incurred by Ireland at the time of the great famine, six years before, was wiped out. But Ireland was a loser by the transaction; for while the interest on the debt was £245,000, the Irish Income Tax brought in about twice as much. This financial statement has never been surpassed, and scarcely ever been

equalled, for felicity of phrase, lucidity of arrangement, historical interest, and logical cogency of argument. Among its other provisions, it repealed the Soap Tax, it reduced the Tea Duty by gradual stages to 1s. in the pound, and it took off the tax on more than one hundred minor articles of food. As originally framed, it lowered the advertisement duty, which had been a heavy burden on newspapers, and a great check to their multiplication, from eighteenpence to sixpence. But in the month of July, mainly at the instance of Mr. Milner Gibson, who distinguished himself by persistent hostility to what he called the taxes on knowledge, the duty was abolished altogether, in spite of opposition from the Government, by seventy votes against sixty-one. Otherwise Gladstone's triumph was so complete that no effective resistance could be offered to his main proposals in the House of Commons. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, afterwards Lord Lytton, divided the Committee against the continuance of the Income Tax, but he was beaten by a majority of seventy-one.

This Budget promised to be the beginning of a new financial era, which would carry out and carry further the principle of Free Trade. But Gladstone's plans were seriously delayed, though not ultimately defeated, by an event which, at the beginning of 1853, nobody could well have foreseen. A quarrel

arose between the Roman and Greek Churches about the custody of the Holy Places in Jerusalem. Turkey took one side and Russia the other. The Emperor Nicholas, besides espousing the cause of his own Church, claimed a general protectorate over Greek subjects of the Porte, and in June a Russian army invaded the Danubian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. On October 4, Turkey declared war against Russia. On the 12th, Gladstone went to Manchester to unveil a statue of Peel. In an eloquent and earnest speech he described Russia as "a Power which threatened to override all the rest." He added, in language which though conciliatory in form was in substance ominous, that the Government was still anxious to maintain peace. That was true of himself, of the Prime Minister, and of perhaps half the Cabinet; but the Government was a divided one. Lord John Russell disliked his subordinate position. Lord Palmerston, though an excellent Home Secretary, was uneasy in the Home Office, and had his eye always on foreign affairs. It was he and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, British Ambassador at Constantinople, who, together with Lord Clarendon and the Emperor Nicholas, made the Crimean War. The causes of that war have been variously and inconsistently defined. Gladstone, who as a Cabinet Minister was, of course,

jointly responsible for it, always maintained that it was not undertaken on behalf of Turkey, but to preserve the balance of power, to vindicate the public law of Europe, and to restrain the ambition of an overweening autocrat. Meanwhile there were troubles within the Cabinet. In December, Lord Palmerston resigned. The nominal cause of his resignation was Lord John Russell's persistence in attempting to introduce a Reform Bill. But when he returned to office a few days afterwards, the British Fleet was ordered to the Black Sea. On March 28, 1854, England and France declared war against Russia. Meanwhile, on March 6, when war was known to be imminent, though it had not actually begun, Gladstone introduced his second Budget. It was very different from the first. He had to provide for an expenditure of which he had no idea in the spring of 1853. But he declined to borrow. He made an animated protest against carrying on war by means of loans, which he said had nearly ruined the country at the close of the last century. His proposal was to double the Income Tax for half the year, thus raising it from 7d. to 1s. 2d., and to collect the whole of the increase within the first six months. On May 8, however, he was obliged to introduce a Supplementary Budget, and to double the tax for the second half-year too. He also raised

the duty on spirits, increased the Malt Tax, much to the disgust of the agriculturists, and made a small addition to the duty on sugar. He courageously defended these proposals, on the double ground that the year's expenditure should be met within the year, and that all classes of the nation should contribute to the cost of a national war. Although there was a good deal of grumbling, this Budget also passed without serious difficulty. On December 12, Parliament met for a winter session. But the country was now enthusiastic for the war, and the Government were able to do exactly what they pleased.

The winter of 1854–55 was one of unusual and almost unprecedented severity throughout Europe. The sufferings of the troops in the Crimea were terrible, and were brought prominently before the notice of the public by Mr. William Howard Russell, afterwards Sir William Russell, the war correspondent of the *Times*. When Parliament met, after the Christmas recess, on January 23, Mr. Roebuck, the Radical member for Sheffield, at once gave notice that he would move for a Select Committee to inquire into the condition of the Army, and into those public departments which were responsible for it. Lord John Russell, feeling himself unable to oppose this motion, resigned, and his

resignation was announced on the 25th. On the same day Roebuck proposed his motion. On the 29th, Gladstone spoke with great energy against it, and in doing so severely condemned, by implication, the conduct of Lord John. "If," he said, "the Government had accepted such a resolution, or had retired rather than meet it, they would have deserved to be described as 'men who, to escape punishment, ran away from duty.'" His arguments, however, were unavailing. The House of Commons was thoroughly indignant with the Government, and Roebuck's motion was carried by the enormous majority of 157. This put an end to the Ministry of Lord Aberdeen. The Queen sent for Lord Derby, and he again made overtures to the Peelites. He first, however, invited Lord Palmerston. But he suggested to Palmerston that Gladstone and Sidney Herbert should come in with him. To Lord Derby's extreme annoyance and surprise, they all refused; thus, in his opinion, justifying his statement, in 1851, that the Peelites used their talents chiefly for the purpose of making all government impossible. They promised him, indeed, an independent support: but for that he did not care; and it was upon this occasion that he favoured her Majesty with his celebrated definition of an independent member as a member who could not be

depended on. Lord Derby having felt himself unable to form a Government out of his own party, and Lord John Russell having failed, as, under the circumstances, might have been anticipated, the old Government was reconstructed, with Lord Palmerston as Premier in place of Lord Aberdeen. The Duke of Newcastle, who, as the first Secretary of State for War, had been the chief target of attack, retired with his chief; but Gladstone, though on February 5 he warmly defended his old friend the Duke against the strictures of Lord John, remained for a few weeks in office. On February 22, however, he resigned, together with Sir James Graham, Mr. Herbert, and Mr. Cardwell. Their ground for taking this step was that Lord Palmerston had agreed to accept Mr. Roebuck's committee, although he was himself opposed to it, and had given them an assurance that he would resist it. They also took the line that the committee, which included no member of the Government, was unconstitutional, inasmuch as it tended to relieve the Executive of a responsibility which belonged only to Ministers of the Crown. Their explanations were made in the House of Commons on February 23, in the course of a miscellaneous debate, rendered memorable by Mr. Bright's great speech, with its famous and familiar image of the Angel of Death.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION.

LORD PALMERSTON, immediately after the formation of his Government, sent Lord John Russell, who had accepted office under him as Colonial Secretary, on a special mission to Vienna, to negotiate terms of peace. The effort failed; but from that time Gladstone ceased to defend the war, and contended that its ultimate objects had been secured. The Protectorate had, he argued, been given up; the unfair pretensions of Russia were abated, and the destruction of her preponderant power in the Black Sea was not a sufficient reason for continuing the struggle. During the progress of the war the House of Commons, like the country, took little interest in any other subject. But, on July 12, 1855, Gladstone spoke strongly in favour of open competition in the public service, as recommended in a report signed, nearly two years before, by Sir Charles Trevelyan and by Sir Stafford Northcote, who had been his own private

secretary at the Board of Trade. On August 3 he returned to the subject of the Vienna Conference, and in supporting a motion made by Mr. Laing, pleaded once more vainly for peace. He relied upon the satisfaction of Austria with the Russian terms, and protested against imposing upon the new Czar, who had succeeded his father in February, unnecessarily humiliating conditions. On March 30, 1856, the Treaty of Paris, which terminated the war, was signed, and on May 5 Gladstone joined in the general congratulations of the Government upon the establishment of an honourable peace. But he pointed out that the neutralization of the Black Sea involved a "series of pitfalls," and no one acquainted with this speech can have been surprised at his acquiescence in the removal of that article from the Treaty when he was himself Prime Minister fifteen years afterwards.

On March 8, 1856, just before the proclamation of peace, Lord John Russell, who had again resigned office on his return from Vienna the year before, proposed in the House of Commons, as an independent member, a series of resolutions on the subject of national education. They nominally provided for increasing the powers and duties of the Committee of Council; but they really contained the germs of School Boards, and of a Conscience

Clause. They would have confined religious instruction to the daily reading of the Bible in elementary schools. Lord John did not press them to a division, and the debate was adjourned till April 10, when the House went into Committee on the whole of them. Even then Lord John intimated that he would not take the sense of the Committee on them one by one. But there was a long debate upon the whole subject, in the course of which Gladstone delivered an elaborate defence of the voluntary system. The two points to which he especially objected were the increased centralization, which he discerned in Lord John's plan, and the purely secular teaching to which he believed it would lead. Ultimately all the resolutions were disposed of by a preliminary motion, on which 158 members voted for them and 260 against them.

On February 20, 1857, Mr. Disraeli moved that the Income Tax ought to be finally remitted in the year 1860. This was in accordance with Gladstone's first Budget, and he spoke in support of the motion. At the same time he severely criticized the financial arrangements of his successor, Sir George Lewis, which he said reversed the principles of the last fifteen years, as laid down in Peel's great Budget of 1842. He especially

condemned the increase of indirect taxes, such as the duties on tea and sugar. The motion was defeated by a majority of eighty. But on the report of Supply Gladstone returned to the subject, and pleaded with great earnestness for the necessity of cutting down the national expenditure, which had, he said, quite apart from the war, outgrown to a dangerous degree the resources of the country.

But the moment was not altogether opportune for economy. The Speech from the Throne had referred to "acts of violence, insults to the British flag, and infraction of treaty rights committed by the local Chinese authorities at Canton." These acts, "and the pertinacious refusal of redress, had rendered it necessary for her Majesty's officers in China to have recourse to measures of force to obtain satisfaction." The reference was to the case of the lorcha *Arrow*. The *Arrow* was a small boat, called by that Portuguese name, from which Governor Yeh of Canton had taken twelve men on a charge of piracy. The *Arrow* was not an English boat, though it was flying the British flag. But Mr. Parkes, the British Consul at Canton, contended that the flag protected the men, although they were Chinese, and demanded their surrender with an apology. The men were given up, but the

apology was refused, and the British Minister at Pekin, Sir John Bowring, a Radical and a friend of Cobden, proceeded to make war on China by the bombardment of Canton. The date of the seizure was October 8, 1856, and the bombardment lasted from October 23 to November 13. On February 24, 1857, Lord Derby moved in the House of Lords a vote of censure on the Government for these proceedings. He was supported in his protest against their illegality by the high authority of Lord Lyndhurst; but his motion was rejected by a majority of thirty-six. There was a very different division in the House of Commons. The last Whig Government, as Palmerston's first Administration may fairly be called, had the singular experience of being absolved by the Lords and condemned by the Commons. On February 26, Mr. Cobden moved that "the papers which have been laid upon the table fail to establish satisfactory grounds for the violent measures resorted to at Canton in the late affair of the *Arrow*." Cobden was supported by Gladstone, who, true to the principles he had laid down in 1840, severely denounced this high-handed and unjustifiable treatment of a weak nation. The Government were defeated by a majority of sixteen. In the course of the debate Disraeli had challenged

Palmerston to appeal to the country. Palmerston, who understood the temper of the middle classes better than any statesman of his time, at once responded to the challenge. The division had been taken on March 3; on March 5 the dissolution of Parliament was announced. Palmerston obtained from the constituencies a large majority, and his Chinese policy was emphatically endorsed by the nation. His principal opponents, including Cobden, Bright, Milner-Gibson, and Fox, the member for Oldham, lost their seats. Gladstone, however, was more fortunate, for the University of Oxford did not even put him to the trouble of a contest.

In the first session of the new Parliament, Gladstone's activity was almost entirely confined to the Bill for establishing the Divorce Court, which came to the House of Commons from the House of Lords, and of which the second reading was moved on July 24. Gladstone opposed this Bill with greater vigour and pertinacity than he ever displayed in resisting any other measure, before or since. In his speech upon the second reading he took the high line that marriage is absolutely indissoluble, and that no human authority could set aside a union of which the sanction was Divine. In a historical review of the whole question he sought to prove that re-marriage in the lifetime

of both parties had never been allowed in the first three centuries of the Christian era, and he described divorce as inconsistent with the character of a Christian country. The Bill was carried by large majorities, and there was one argument which its opponents, with all their ability, failed, in the general opinion, to meet. They talked as if divorce had been impossible and unknown before the year 1857. As a matter of fact, it was constantly granted by Act of Parliament; which meant that it was a privilege of the rich, and that it was denied to the poor. Gladstone, however, fought the Bill steadily through Committee, and came into frequent collision with the Attorney-General, Sir Richard Bethell, afterwards Lord Westbury, who had charge of it. Intellectually the combatants were well matched, and their argumentative battle was one of the most exciting that the House of Commons has seen. Gladstone had the courage to support Mr. Drummond's amendment, which would have given to a woman the right to divorce on the same terms as a man. But even this proposition, against which it was hard to find tenable reasons, was rejected by nearly two to one. The only concession which Gladstone extorted from the Government was that no clergyman should be compelled to celebrate the marriage of a divorced person. The

Bill was not read a third time in the House of Commons till August 21, and when it went back to the House of Lords for consideration of the Commons amendments it only escaped defeat by two votes. The expediency of this measure is still acutely controversial, and the High Church party have never been reconciled to it. Gladstone always maintained that it was wrong in principle, and pernicious in its consequences; but he felt that to repeal it was out of the question.

On January 14, 1858, an attempt was made by an Italian called Felice Orsini, and others, to assassinate the Emperor of the French. The Emperor escaped, but several bystanders were killed. Orsini, with one confederate, was executed, and the indignation in France was extreme. It was proved at the trial that the conspiracy had been partly hatched in London, the bombs having been made in Birmingham; and the French Minister for Foreign Affairs sent, on January 28, an angry dispatch, in which he demanded that England should give up her practice of harbouring criminal refugees. In consequence of this dispatch the Government introduced a Bill which made conspiracy to murder felony, punishable with penal servitude, instead of a misdemeanour, punishable only with a short term of imprisonment. But

meanwhile the British public had been highly incensed by the violent language of some French officers, which had found its way into the *Moniteur*, the official organ of the French Ministry. There was a strong feeling against abridging the right of asylum, and Palmerston was attacked for not having immediately replied to Count Walewski's demands. Milner-Gibson, who had found another seat, expressed this sentiment in a long amendment which he moved on the second reading of the Bill. Gladstone spoke in favour of the amendment, maintaining that to pass such a measure, at such a time, involved moral complicity with the repressive acts of despotic monarchies. The second reading of the Bill was moved on February 19; the amendment was carried by a majority of nineteen, and on February 22 Palmerston announced his resignation. The Queen sent for Lord Derby, who again applied to Gladstone. Gladstone, however, refused the invitation, and a purely Conservative Government was again formed. But when, in May, Lord Ellenborough, the President of the Board of Control, resigned, Lord Derby pressed the office upon Gladstone, and Disraeli entreated him to accept it. If he had complied with this invitation, he would have been the last President of the Board and the first Secretary of

State for India. He declined it, however, and this was the last offer he received from the Tories. On May 4 he moved an address to the Crown in favour of reuniting the Danubian Principalities, in accordance with the wishes of their inhabitants and with the Treaty of Paris. The motion was defeated by a majority of 178, but it was only premature. Within three years, in December 1861, Moldavia and Wallachia became the single Principality, now Kingdom, of Roumania. Gladstone's only other important speech in that session was delivered against the third reading of Sir John Trelawny's Bill for the abolition of Church rates, which he was afterwards himself to abolish.

Gladstone had now been more than three years out of office, and the fruits of his comparative leisure appeared in his work on Homer and the Homeric age Although Gladstone never attained, nor deserved, the same celebrity as a writer which he enjoyed as an orator, he was indefatigable with his pen, and had been for some years a pretty regular contributor to the *Quarterly Review*, as he became long afterwards to the *Contemporary Review*, the *Nineteenth Century*, and other periodicals. It was in the *Quarterly* that he first wrote on the subject of Homer, being induced to do so by the destructive criticisms of Lachmann upon the in-

tegrity of Homer's text. The book, published in the summer of 1858 at the Oxford University Press, is one of the most extraordinary that have ever been composed by a man of affairs. It is not, never has been, and never can be, popular; but it is a monument of erudition, of eloquence, of literary criticism, of poetic taste, and of speculations the most fantastic in which a student ever indulged. It can only be judged by scholars, and their judgment is very different upon the different aspects of the work. Gladstone was himself a thorough scholar in the old-fashioned sense of the term. He knew the Greek and Latin classics as well as they could be known by any one who had not devoted his life to their study—as well as Pitt, or Fox, or Peel, or Macaulay, or Lord Derby. In his accurate and minute acquaintance with Homer he has never been surpassed. His account of the social, personal, and political life which Homer describes is not only most interesting, but most valuable, even when he comes into conflict with the more prosaic mind but sounder judgment of Mr. Grote. He was not, however, content with expounding the Homeric poems. He made a whole series of assumptions, and from them he deduced inferences which, however subtle, have no solid ground to rest upon. He assumed that Homer was an actual person, that

he was the sole author both of the "Iliad" and of the "Odyssey," and that the whole text of those poems is equally genuine. He put into Homer's mind, or into the minds of the Ballad-mongers who, as some think, are called by that collective name, ideas which were utterly alien to the Greek mind, and which would have been quite as strange to Aristotle as to Homer. He saw in Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades—that is to say, in Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto—an analogue of the Trinity. He connected the Homeric Ate with the devil, and he regarded Apollo as a "representative of the Messianic tradition that the seed of the woman should crush the serpent's head." To the comparative philologist, to the scientific mythologist, and to the merely secular scholar, these ideas have no real meaning at all. But the work remains a marvellous example of deep and even sublime meditation upon all that is contained and all that is suggested by the greatest epic poems of the world.

It was said to be partly in consequence of this book, and of the enthusiasm for modern Greece expressed in it, that in November 1858 Sir Edward Lytton, Secretary for the Colonies, entrusted Gladstone with a special mission to the Ionian Islands. These seven islands, of which Corfu is the chief, had been under a British protectorate since the peace of

1815. That they were well administered was not denied ; but they had a strong desire for union with Greece, and their discontent became so serious that the Government felt it necessary to make inquiry into its origin. Gladstone visited the Islands, and did his best to discourage the agitation by promising them a larger measure of self-government under English rule. But there was only one thing they wanted, and a proposal for incorporation with the Greek kingdom was carried unanimously by the Legislative Assembly at Corfu. Gladstone left Corfu on February 19, 1859, and duly reported what he had seen. But it was not till 1864, when King Otho abdicated and was succeeded by King George, that the Islands finally became Greek.

On February 28, 1859, Mr. Disraeli, now for the second time Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, brought in his first Reform Bill. It was, however, as much Lord Derby's as his, and Lord Derby, though now the leader of the Conservative Party, had all his life been a Parliamentary reformer. The Bill was of the mildest possible character. It extended the £10 franchise from boroughs to counties, and it introduced the first form of the lodger vote. But it entirely ignored the working classes, while it proposed some kinds of franchise unknown before and

unheard of since. It proposed to give votes to every one holding £10 in any Government security, or £60 in a savings bank, or receiving £20 by way of a pension, as well as to all graduates, clergymen, lawyers, doctors, and schoolmasters. Mr. Bright, in one of his happiest phrases, dubbed these proposals "fancy franchises," and this expression was really the death of the Bill. Small as the measure was, however, it was too large for two members of the Cabinet. On March 1, Mr. Walpole and Mr. Henley intimated their resignation. On March 20, the second reading of the Bill was moved, and the debate was continued for seven nights. Lord John Russell proposed a hostile amendment, against which Gladstone spoke. He did not approve of the Bill, which he considered totally inadequate. But he defended with unexpected vigour the maintenance of pocket boroughs, and he expressly declined to give a vote which might have the effect of turning out Lord Derby's Administration. His advocacy of the Government was, however, unsuccessful. On April 1 the House divided, and the second reading of the Bill was rejected by a majority of thirty-nine. On April 20, Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli announced the dissolution of Parliament. The policy of this dissolution was severely criticized, and Gladstone was among the

critics. But though he himself was again returned without opposition for Oxford, the Government gained a considerable number of seats. They did not, however, gain enough. The Liberal Party, after the election, had a small but a sufficient majority. At a meeting held in Willis's Rooms, and attended by Mr. Bright, they all agreed to act together. The new Parliament met on May 31, the Queen's Speech was read on June 7, and Lord Hartington, afterwards Duke of Devonshire, who now appeared for the first time in politics, at once gave notice, as an amendment to the Address, of a vote of no confidence in the Government of Lord Derby. The debate turned partly upon the impolicy of the recent dissolution, but its main subject was foreign affairs.

A war had broken out between France and Austria which, it was argued, the Government might have averted. Lord Malmesbury, the Foreign Secretary, was suspected, not without reason, of hostility to Italian independence, which was the avowed object of the war on the part of France. By some design, or accident never fully explained, Mr. Disraeli did not present the Blue Book—which proved, even in Mr. Cobden's opinion, that the Government had observed an attitude of strict neutrality—till after the division in the House of

Commons. In that division the Ayes were 323 and the Noes 310—thus giving the Opposition the narrow majority of thirteen. Gladstone voted silently with the Government. Lord Derby resigned, and the Queen, feeling it invidious to choose between Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, sent for Lord Granville. Lord Granville, however, failed, chiefly because Lord John refused to serve under him, and the Queen then sent for Lord Palmerston, who succeeded without difficulty in forming an Administration. He offered the Chancellorship of the Exchequer to Gladstone, who accepted it. This was one of the strangest incidents in Gladstone's career, and he felt the necessity of an explanation. Having twice voted in favour of Lord Derby's Government, he had immediately taken service with Lord Derby's rival and successor. Not being able, as a University member, to address his constituents, he wrote a long letter on the subject to Dr. Hawkins, the Provost of Oriel. No one could accuse him of being an office-seeker: he had three times refused office and twice resigned it. It was extremely improbable that he would ever again be approached by the Tories, and if, like Mr. Cobden, he had declined Lord Palmerston's offer, it was quite possible that, like Mr. Cobden, who had had no official experience, he would

have remained a private member for the rest of his life.

There can be little doubt that he felt himself at that time to be the man best capable of managing the national finances, which were by no means in a satisfactory state. To Dr. Hawkins he pointed out that most of the new Cabinet, which contained only one Radical, Mr. Milner-Gibson, were the men with whom he had acted in the Government of Lord Aberdeen. But feeling at Oxford was much excited by what appeared to be his permanent enlistment in the Liberal ranks, and his seat, vacated by his appointment, was keenly contested. The Tory candidate was Lord Chandos, afterwards Duke of Buckingham, who polled 859 against 1,050 for Gladstone. Gladstone's first official duty was to introduce the Budget, which had been unduly delayed by the General Election. He had to provide for a deficit of nearly £5,000,000. He did so mainly by raising the Income Tax from 5d. to 9d., the whole of the increase to be paid in the first half of the financial year.

CHAPTER VIII.

GLADSTONIAN FINANCE.

THE Budget of 1860 was one of Gladstone's greatest and most memorable achievements. It had been preceded by the Commercial Treaty with France, which Mr. Cobden, holding no official position, had, under Gladstone's superintendence, concluded in the autumn with the Emperor of the French. By this Treaty, which was to last for ten years, England agreed to abolish all duties on manufactured goods, and to reduce the duties on brandy and wine. France agreed to lower her tariff on English goods, and to treat England on the footing of the most favoured nation. In his Budget speech, which was a brilliant success, and revived the memories of 1853, Gladstone met the arguments of those who said that a Commercial Treaty was an abandonment of Free Trade. He showed that the duties abolished were essentially protective, so that his scheme was in effect the completion of what Peel had begun in 1842 and

continued in 1846. Meeting a plea that his Budget relieved only the rich, because the taxes remitted were not paid by the poor, he proved that the poor did not pay them only because they were prohibitive, and confined the articles on which they were imposed exclusively to the well-to-do. The reductions, he said, would have been advantageous to this country even if France had done nothing, and the concessions made by France rendered them doubly profitable. Before closing that part of his great speech which dealt with the Treaty, he paid an eloquent tribute to Cobden, who had performed for the second time in his life, without fee or reward, an inestimable service to his country. The Budget also made further reductions in the taxes upon articles of food. It imposed a registration duty of a penny a packet upon imported and exported goods, and a duty of 6s. upon chicory, which was largely used in the adulteration of coffee. An Excise licence was granted to the keepers of eating-houses, enabling them, for the first time, to sell beer and wine on the premises, and thus affording an alternative to the public-house. The Paper Duty was repealed. The Income Tax was raised to 10d. upon all incomes above £150, and to 7d. below that amount. Incomes below £100 had never paid it since the time of Pitt. To

illustrate the effect of his proposals in promoting the freedom of commerce, Gladstone explained that while in 1845 the number of articles subject to Customs duties was 1,163, and in 1853 460, it was now brought down to 48.

The first opposition to this historical Budget was raised on February 20, when Mr. Disraeli moved that the assent of the House should be obtained for the Treaty before they discussed the items of the Budget. Gladstone's reply was chiefly founded on precedent, especially the precedent set by Pitt in 1798. The majority for the Government was sixty-three. The next day Mr. Du Cane moved an amendment hostile to the whole principle of the financial scheme. But this was defeated by 116, and with one exception the proposals of the Budget were now safe. To meet the scruples of those who apprehended that the House of Commons was losing its control over commercial instruments, a Ministerial member, Mr. Byng, moved, on March 8, an address to the Crown in favour of the Treaty, which was carried by 282. To the Bill providing for the repeal of the Paper Duty a much more serious resistance was offered. It came partly from the manufacturers of paper, and partly from the proprietors of the more expensive journals, who were afraid of the

competition it would encourage. But the second reading was carried by a majority of fifty-three, and the House rose for the Easter Recess.

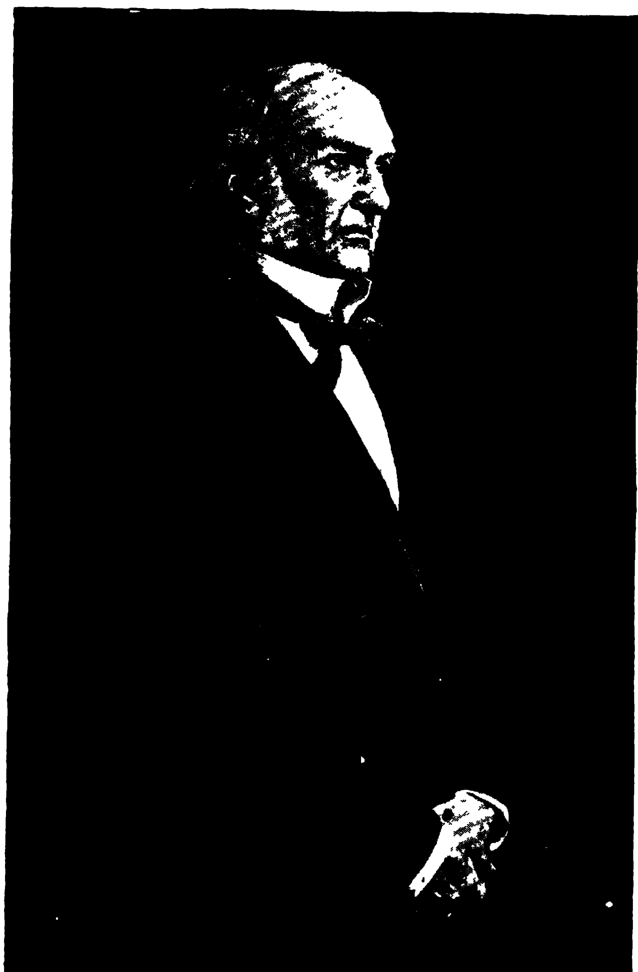
Meanwhile, on March 1, the exact anniversary of the day on which the great Reform Bill had been moved by Lord John Russell, Lord John, now Foreign Secretary, introduced his second Reform Bill. There were no fancy franchises in it. It reduced the county franchise to £10, and the borough franchise to £6. It provided for a slight redistribution of seats, and gave a member to the University of London. The second reading was moved on March 19, and on May 3, after a speech from Gladstone in support of it, was carried without a division. But the Conservatives, though they would not take the sense of the House, resorted to dilatory tactics, which fatally impeded the progress of the measure, and on June 11 it was withdrawn. On April 16, Gladstone, who had been elected Lord Rector of the University of Edinburgh, delivered an address on the function of Universities, which is now chiefly interesting as being the first of the kind that he was called upon to give.

When Parliament met again after the Recess a very formidable campaign was opened against the Paper Bill, and the third reading was only carried

by a majority of nine. In a letter to the Queen, for which it would be difficult to find a precedent, Lord Palmerston, who was of course as much responsible for the Bill as Gladstone himself, intimated that this division would probably encourage the House of Lords to throw it out, that if they did so they would perform a public service, and that the Government might well submit to so welcome a defeat. Throughout Lord Palmerston's second Administration a feeling of more or less active hostility prevailed between himself and his Chancellor of the Exchequer. They agreed upon scarcely any subject except Italian unity, and it is marvellous that they should have remained in the same Cabinet so long. But though Gladstone frequently threatened to resign, he remained in office for the rest of Lord Palmerston's life, and for some time afterwards.

On May 21, Lord Granville moved the second reading of the Paper Bill in the House of Lords. After a learned argument from Lord Lyndhurst to prove that the Lords might reject though they could not amend a money Bill, and a personal attack on Gladstone by Lord Derby, which he combined with effusive compliments to Lord Palmerston, the Bill was thrown out by a majority of eighty-nine. On May 25, Palmerston moved for

a Committee to inquire into the privileges of the House of Commons and the rights of the House of Lords in matters of taxation. The Committee having sat and drawn up a purely historical report, Palmerston moved, on July 5, a series of resolutions, carefully framed, and of great political value, which set out in effect that the grant of supply is in the Commons alone. His speech, as might have been expected, was a mild one, and advanced Liberals complained that he had practically given up the case. But Gladstone made amends in their eyes for the deficiencies of his chief. In the most Radical speech that he had yet made, he affirmed that for two hundred years the Lords had never ventured to retain a tax which the Commons had remitted, and, answering Lord Lyndhurst by implication, he pointed out that it was not their power to reject money Bills, but their right to interfere with taxation, which the representatives of the people were bound to combat. In significant language, not sufficiently noticed at the time, he reserved to himself the right of enforcing the Commons' privileges, not by words, but by action. The vote of the Lords was, however, decisive for the year, and on August 6 the House of Commons divided upon retaining the Customs duty on foreign paper, which was not touched by the vote. Glad-



THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

(After the portrait by Sir J. E. Millais, P.R.A., in the National Gallery, London Painted in 1885.)

stone, however, pointed out that this question was concluded by the Treaty, and his view was sustained by a majority of thirty-three. In the month of July it became necessary for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide for the cost of the Chinese Expedition jointly carried out by England and France under Lord Elgin, who had superseded Sir John Bowring and Baron Gros. He found the money by increasing the spirit duties 1s. a gallon.

Gladstone's budgets were the greatest and most popular events of Palmerston's second and longer Administration. They excited unparalleled interest in the country, and the House of Commons was always crowded from floor to roof when they came on. Mr. Disraeli, who, though he was three times Chancellor of the Exchequer, never became an expert financier, could make no head against them, albeit his Parliamentary genius was never more fully displayed than as leader of the Opposition in the Parliament of 1859. But before the Budget of 1861, Gladstone introduced a social and economic reform which has proved immensely advantageous to the lower and middle classes of society. This was the Post Office Savings Bank Bill, which he brought in on February 8, and which became law without any serious difficulty. Hitherto small savings could only be invested on the security of

Government through the savings banks, which were 600 in number, and open for but a few hours in the day. The Bill enabled them to be invested through the postal and money-order offices, of which there were then between 2,000 and 3,000, and which were open from morning till night. The rate of interest was two and a half per cent., which, though not large, was quite sufficient for the purpose; and the success of the measure was as immediate as it was complete. On February 27, Gladstone, speaking as member for Oxford, and not as a Cabinet Minister, again opposed the Bill for the abolition of Church rates. He explained that if he had been in favour of it he should have felt bound to resign his seat, although, as he said, there would have been some difficulty in his conferring the Chiltern Hundreds upon himself. He proposed, however, a compromise, which the Dissenters would not accept, that it should be left for each parish to determine whether they would have a Church rate or not. While he voted against the Bill, Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell voted for it. On March 4 began a very important debate in the House of Commons upon Italian policy. It was raised by Mr., afterwards Sir, John Pope Hennessy, who made a strenuous attack upon Lord John Russell for his Italian sympathies. On

March 7, the last night of the debate, Gladstone spoke with great fervour and eloquence on behalf of Italian unity and independence.

On April 15 he introduced his Budget in a speech which was pronounced by some impartial critics to be the finest he had yet delivered. He took off the penny which he had put on the Income Tax the year before, bringing it down again to 9d. for the larger and 6d. for the smaller incomes. He again proposed the repeal of the Paper Duty. As for the Income Tax, he declared that it depended entirely upon the national expenditure. If, he said, the country would be content to be governed at the cost of £60,000,000, they might get rid of the tax. If they persisted in spending £70,000,000, it was impossible for them to dispense with it. The repeal of the Paper Duty was once more vigorously opposed, and Mr. Horsfall, supported by the whole of the Conservative Party, moved that the Tea Duty should be abolished instead. The motion was defeated by a majority of eighteen; but the Conservatives made a good deal of play with the cry of tea before paper. Gladstone had been subjected to some ridicule for his defeat by the House of Lords in the previous year. But those laugh best who laugh last. It now became apparent that he knew well what he

was about when he reserved to himself in 1860 the right of asserting by action the privileges of the Commons. By a bold and practical innovation, which has ever since been the rule of Parliament, he included all the taxes in one Bill. This Bill, being a money Bill, could not be amended by the Lords, who were therefore reduced to the alternative of either accepting it as it stood or of refusing to concur in any provision for the public service of the year. This masterly stroke succeeded. Although the removal of the tax was finally carried in the House of Commons by the small majority of fifteen, the Lords did not venture to interfere, and on June 7 they adopted without a division the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, which included the abolition of the Paper Duty. From this time dates the cheap press, and the first publication of penny papers forthwith began. On May 7 the subject of the Ionian Islands was brought before the House of Commons, and Gladstone naturally took part in it. He did not approve of their immediate incorporation with the Greek Kingdom, pleading that Greece did not want them. But the whole Government were of opinion that when Greece did want them she ought to have them, and soon after the accession of King George, in 1863, they were made over to her.

The excessive expenditure of which Gladstone complained was mainly due to the large sums which Lord Palmerston demanded for the fortification of the coasts and of the seaports. Against these heavy grants Gladstone more than once protested, and his protests went to the verge of resignation. He agreed rather with Mr. Cobden than with his chief; and when the subject was under discussion his absence from the House was observed. Many of the Conservatives were disposed to take the same line, including Mr. Disraeli, who denounced "bloated armaments." They went so far as to propose a motion in that sense which, if carried, would have put an end to the Government. But at the last moment, by the advice of Lord Derby, and much to Mr. Disraeli's disgust, Mr. Walpole, who had given notice of it, withdrew it, and the House unanimously agreed to a vague resolution in favour of economy, suggested by Lord Palmerston himself.

The Budget of 1862, introduced on April 3, was comparatively prosaic. The Civil War in America, and the blockade of the southern ports which it involved, had greatly raised the price of cotton, and seriously diminished British trade with the United States. That, and a succession of bad harvests, the worst of which fell in 1860, had inter-

fered with the growth of the revenue, and no great remission of taxation was possible. Gladstone, however, repealed the Hop Duty, a very unpopular impost, and substituted for it a readjustment of brewers' licences, which made the larger brewers pay more and the smaller brewers pay less. He also modified the scale of the wine duties, giving a further advantage to the light as against the strong sorts of wine. It is to this Budget and to the Budget of 1860 that we owe the name of "Gladstone claret." To this Budget there was no opposition worth speaking of, though Lord Overstone, a great authority in the City, expressed to the House of Lords grave misgivings about what he considered a dangerous reduction in the number of taxable commodities.

On April 11 the state of Italy was again brought before Parliament, this time by Sir George Bowyer. Indeed, it was only the Irish Catholics who took any prominent part in resisting the Italian policy in which Lord Palmerston, Lord John, who had now become Earl, Russell, and Gladstone equally shared. This debate led to no definite result; but it is memorable for Gladstone's fullest and most elaborate statement of the views which he had long felt on the liberation of the Italian Peninsula. He concluded, as a friend of France, with a courteous

but most earnest protest against the occupation of Rome by the French troops. The rest of his speeches during the year were made, for the most part, outside the walls of Parliament. In March he took the chair at a meeting of Old Etonians, who presented a testimonial to their distinguished schoolfellow, Charles Kean, the eminent actor, and spoke of the great moral influence which Kean's representation of Shakespearian characters had exercised. In April he delivered, at Manchester, an appreciative eulogy of the Prince Consort, who had died at the end of the previous year. A less fortunate utterance, in some respects the most unfortunate of his life, occurred in a speech at Newcastle on October 7. He then said that Jefferson Davis, leader of the Confederate Rebellion, had made an army, had made a navy, and, what was more, had made a nation. He also expressed his opinion that the reunion of the North and the South, as a result of the war, was impossible. These views were held at the time by the vast majority of the upper and middle classes in England, though the working classes, who suffered most by the war, never subscribed to them. The prophecy, however mistaken, was repeated in even stronger terms by both Lord Russell and Lord Derby in the following year. It has to be remem-

bered that the war was not ostensibly begun for the extinction of slavery, but for the maintenance of the Union, and that even Lincoln declared himself at the outset to be no abolitionist. But it was against slavery that the troops of the North really fought; and in 1867 Gladstone had the manliness to avow that he had entirely misunderstood the real nature of the struggle.

On April 15, 1863, Gladstone, for the first time, supported the Burials Bill, then in the hands of Sir Morton Peto, which proposed to give Dissenters the right of being buried with their own ceremonies in the parish churchyards. But the Bill was rejected by 221 votes against 96; and it was seventeen years before this reform was carried. The next day, April 16, Gladstone brought in his annual Budget. There was a large surplus, notwithstanding the cotton famine in Lancashire, which had become terribly severe, and the great distress in Ireland caused by the failure of crops. The price of cotton had risen during the war from 6d. to 2s. a pound, and our trade with America suffered heavily in consequence. The benefits of the Commercial Treaty with France were now for the first time fully seen, and the enormous increase in Anglo-French trade made up for the loss in the Anglo-American. Gladstone was enabled to take 2d. off

the Income Tax, reducing it from 9d. to 7d. in the pound; he also raised the limit of partial exemption from incomes of £150 to incomes of £200 a year, and he abolished the penny a packet duty on registration, which he had himself imposed in 1860, but which had proved a failure; he also lowered the Tea Duty from 1s. 5d. to 1s. So far the Budget encouraged no opposition, though a proposal to license clubs was withdrawn. But another proposal, to remove the exemption from Income Tax enjoyed by charitable endowments, excited a furious controversy. On May 4, Gladstone received the largest deputation which had ever waited on a Minister, and which came to protest against this change. It was headed by the Duke of Cambridge, and attended by both the Archbishops, as well as by many other bishops, clergymen, and philanthropic laymen. Gladstone declined to argue the matter with them, and reserved what he had to say for the House of Commons the same evening. Upon that occasion he delivered what has been described by competent judges as the most convincing piece of abstract argument ever addressed to a legislative assembly. He pointed out that the exemption was not really given to charities, but to charitable bequests, which, as they did not take effect till after the death of the testator, were not real charity at all. Every

penny given by a man to charitable objects in his lifetime, though it might involve not only generosity but privation, was taxed to the uttermost. He asked whether it was right and just that Parliament should not merely allow perfect freedom of bequest, but should specially favour wills which might endow a charitable institution and leave the testator's family to starve. He showed that, while endowed hospitals were favoured, unendowed hospitals received no indulgence; he contrasted Christ's Hospital, which received under this exemption a large sum, and King's College, which received nothing; he gave an appalling list of charitable endowments which had been proved by Royal Commissions to be actively mischievous; he asserted that an exemption from a tax was a grant of public money, and he denied the moral right of Parliament to grant money without retaining control of it. No serious attempt was made, or ever has been made, to answer this speech. But it had absolutely no effect upon the House; no independent member on either side supported the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Government declined to make it a question of confidence, and the proposal was withdrawn.

On July 2, Gladstone, speaking this time with the full authority of the Government and supported by Mr. Disraeli, suffered an overwhelming defeat. His

proposal to purchase the buildings used for the Exhibition of 1862 for £105,000 was rejected by 287 votes against 121. It was apparently regarded as a Court job. In the course of this year Gladstone brought out, with Lord Lyttelton, a joint volume of translations. Gladstone's were from Greek, Latin, Italian, and German into English, as well as from English into Greek and Latin. In the latter accomplishment, however, he was far inferior to Lord Lyttelton. The best of his classical translations is from the battle-piece in the fourth book of the "Iliad," with the famous simile of the waves breaking on the beach. But the best in the whole book is his spirited rendering into English of Manzoni's ode on the death of Napoleon. The most popular, or at least the best known, is the version, in rhyming Latin, of Toplady's famous hymn "Rock of Ages."

The Budget of 1864 was introduced on April 7; the surplus was two millions and a half. With this Gladstone reduced the sugar duties by a sum of £1,700,000, and further lowered the Income Tax from 7d. to 6d. He also made a small concession to the agricultural interest—for which he got no thanks—by exempting from duty malt employed in feeding cattle. The principal measure of the year, besides the Budget, was a Bill for providing

Government annuities and Government insurance through the Post Office Savings Banks. The Bill was severely criticized; but Gladstone saved it by consenting to lay it before a Select Committee, which reported favourably upon it, and it passed into law without further difficulty.

The subject of Schleswig-Holstein was brought before Parliament by Mr. Disraeli on July 4. By a treaty of 1852, England, France, and Russia were pledged to protect the integrity of the Danish Kingdom as it stood at the accession of King Christian. Austria and Prussia had, however, occupied the Duchies on the ground that they were not Danish but German. Lord Malmesbury carried in the House of Lords, by nine votes, a motion censuring the Government for not fulfilling its pledge under the treaty. Mr. Disraeli, while criticizing the policy of the Government with great severity, stopped short of saying that they ought to have gone to war without France and Russia, who had refused to interfere. This was the mainstay to Gladstone's argument in defence of the Cabinet. He contended that the liability was joint and not several, so that it ceased with the refusal of the other Powers to act. The motion was lost by a majority of eighteen, and the result greatly strengthened Lord Palmerston's Government.

But Gladstone's most important speech this year had been made at an earlier date. On Wednesday afternoon, May 11, Mr. Baines, afterwards Sir Edward Baines, moved the second reading of his Reform Bill, which lowered the franchise from £10 to £6. Since the removal of Lord Russell from the House of Commons the Government had done nothing in the direction of Parliamentary Reform. But on this occasion, in Lord Palmerston's absence, Gladstone gave Mr. Baines's Bill his powerful support. This was the most frankly democratic speech he had yet made. He pointed out that only one-fiftieth of the working classes had votes. He claimed the right of every man, not disqualified, to come within the pale of the Constitution, and he stated that the burden of proof rested with those who denied any man's right to vote. He implored the House not to wait for agitation before they widened the suffrage, and he appealed to the fortitude of the operatives in the Lancashire famine as a proof that they were eminently qualified to discharge all the duties of citizens. The ultimate effect of this spirited declaration was immense; but it had little or no influence on the division, and the House refused, by 272 votes against 56, to read the Bill a second time.

On March 28, 1865, Mr. Dillwyn, Liberal member

for Swansea, asked the House of Commons to declare that the position of the Irish Church was unsatisfactory, and demanded the early attention of the Government. Gladstone declined on behalf of the Cabinet to accept the motion. But he did so only on the ground that it was inopportune. He fully admitted that the Irish Church was what Mr. Dillwyn described it. Establishments, he said, were meant for the whole nation, but barely one-eighth of the Irish people belonged to the Established Church. As a missionary Church she had been a failure, for the proportion of Irish Protestants to Irish Catholics was far smaller in the nineteenth century than in the sixteenth. But the Government were not at that moment prepared to say what should be done. The great difficulty was the disposal of the endowments, which the Roman Catholics had no desire to share. The motion came to nothing, for the debate was adjourned and never resumed. But it was the beginning of the end.

On April 27, Gladstone introduced his Budget, and triumphantly pointed to a considerable decrease in the national expenditure. Reviewing the commercial legislation of that long Parliament, he paid once more an eloquent tribute to the public services of Mr. Cobden, which derived a melancholy interest from Cobden's death a few weeks before. He

announced a surplus of four millions, with which he lowered the duty on tea from 1s. to 6d. in the pound, and the Income Tax from 6d. to 4d., which he declared to be its proper rate in time of peace. The question whether it should be retained at all he left to the new Parliament. He reduced the tax on fire insurance by one-half, not willingly, but of necessity, having been previously defeated in the House when he resisted Mr. Sheridan's proposal for its reduction. On the other hand, he refused, in spite of a subsequent defeat, to abolish the duty on the certificates of attorneys and solicitors. On June 14, Mr. Goschen moved the second reading of a Bill removing theological tests for University degrees. Gladstone opposed the Bill in a speech which gave great offence to many of his Liberal admirers. He said that he would be no party to separating knowledge from religion, and he praised the wisdom of the denominational system. The academic Liberals complained that their leader had turned round and fired in their faces.

CHAPTER IX.

UNMUZZLED.

ON July 6, Parliament was prorogued, and, having lasted six years, was immediately afterwards dissolved. The result of the General Election, which excited little interest, was the return of 367 Liberals and 290 Conservatives. This was a Liberal gain of forty-eight votes on a division. The chief Liberal victories were in Ireland, where the Catholics had been greatly incensed at an attack made upon them by Lord Derby in the House of Lords. But the chief event of the elections was Gladstone's defeat at Oxford. The nomination took place on July 13, and the poll, under an Act passed the year before, lasted for five days. The same Act also allowed, for the first time, the use of voting papers, which could be sent by post, and thus, by increasing the practical power of the non-residents, contributed to Gladstone's defeat. His Tory colleague, Sir William Heathcote, was virtually unopposed. But the Tories ran a second candidate, Mr. Gathorne

Hardy, afterwards Earl of Cranbrook. On July 18 the numbers were declared as follows: Heathcote, 3,236; Hardy, 1,904; Gladstone, 1724—being a majority for Hardy over Gladstone of 180. Gladstone had a majority among the resident members of the University, and even among the heads of houses. Of the professors, twenty-four voted for him, and only ten against him. Bishop Wilberforce used all his influence in support of his old friend, who received the suffrages, not only of Jowett and Pattison, but of Keble and Pusey. On July 17, the day before the declaration of the poll at Oxford, Gladstone had been nominated for South Lancashire. On the 18th he wrote a dignified farewell to the University, and on the same day arrived at Manchester, where he addressed a crowded meeting in the Free Trade Hall. Borrowing a word which Lord Derby had applied to the Catholics, and which had become notorious, he described himself as "unmuzzled," and intimated that a serious check to his Liberal development had been taken away. There was, however, another which was soon to follow it. On October 18, full of years and honours, Lord Palmerston died. Gladstone, who had on July 29 been returned for South Lancashire below two Conservatives, at once wrote to Lord Russell and offered, in the event of the

Queen sending for the Earl, to continue in office as Chancellor of the Exchequer, with or without the lead of the House of Commons. The Queen did send for Lord Russell; he became Prime Minister, and requested Gladstone to lead the House in his present office. The relations between Gladstone and Russell were extremely cordial, whereas Palmerston had more than once written to the Queen about his Chancellor of the Exchequer in terms of sarcastic censure, which would have been unusually strong if applied to a political opponent.

The principal duty of the new Parliament, after suspending the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland to provide against the first appearance of Fenianism, and passing a Bill to authorize the compulsory slaughter of cattle as a protection against the rinderpest, was to deal with Reform. On March 12, Gladstone introduced the Reform Bill in the House of Commons. The Bill reduced the franchise in counties from a property qualification of £50 to one of £10, and the borough franchise from £10 to £7. It gave votes to compound householders, whose rates were nominally paid by the landlords, and to every man who, for two years, had had £50 in a savings bank. It also disfranchised the labourers in Government dockyards. A vehement opposition to the Bill was at once declared from the Liberal as

well as the Conservative side of the House. The most eloquent and powerful of its Liberal opponents was Mr. Lowe, afterwards Viscount Sherbrooke, whose speeches against it were among the most polished and pointed ever delivered in Parliament. Mr. Bright, in language which has become a permanent part of the political vocabulary, compared Lowe and his friends with the company of the disappointed and discontented whom David gathered into the Cave of Adullam. Lord Grosvenor, afterwards Duke of Westminster, one of the Adullamites, gave notice to move, on the second reading, that the House would decline to proceed with the Bill without having a scheme of redistribution before it; and Lord Stanley, afterwards Earl of Derby, was announced as his seconder. The second reading was postponed till after Easter, and during the recess, on April 6, Gladstone made an important speech at a Liberal dinner in Liverpool. After deploring the fact that two leading members of the aristocracy had combined to defeat Reform, he emphatically declared that in no circumstances would the Bill be withdrawn. "We have," he said, "crossed the Rubicon, broken the bridge, and burned the boats behind us." On April 12 he moved the second reading, and took occasion to point out that the working classes, who had less share in the repre-

sentation than they enjoyed before the great Reform Act, paid five-twelfths of the taxes. He ridiculed the idea that they would all vote together as a class, and no prediction has ever been more amply fulfilled. The debate lasted for eight nights, and closed with a reply from Gladstone, which is generally considered to be the highest flight that his eloquence ever reached. Rising at one in the morning, he reviewed the whole course of the debate, directing himself more especially to the arguments of Mr. Lowe. His speech was a masterpiece of classical eloquence, freely adorned and illustrated by those rich Virgilian hexameters with which, like Mr. Lowe, he delighted to season his Parliamentary oratory. On this occasion he went as far as Aristophanes, quoting in English, with reference to the Adullamites, the great comedian's famous description of "depraved and crooked little men." Contrasting himself with Lord Russell, a life-long Reformer, he admitted the tardiness of his own conversion, and thanked the Liberal party for accepting him as leader. His speech was, in fact, far too great for the Bill. But he concluded with a prophecy, fulfilled more speedily than even he could have anticipated, that time was on his side; that the great social forces, which the tumult of debate could neither impede nor disturb, were fighting

for him, and would end in a certain if distant victory. As soon as he sat down the House divided, and Lord Grosvenor's amendment was rejected by a bare majority of five. A scene of wild enthusiasm followed, in which Mr. Lowe and his friends stood up and cheered themselves hoarse. Their triumph was to be greater still, but it was not to last long.

Before the House went into Committee on the Bill, and amidst a fever of public excitement out of doors, Gladstone, on May 3, produced his Budget. The surplus was nearly a million and a half. With it he repealed the duty on timber, and the Pepper Duty, and reduced the duty on bottled wine to the same level as that on wine in casks. He also lowered the tax on cabs and omnibuses from a penny to a farthing a mile. He announced that commercial treaties, on the model of the Treaty with France, had been concluded with Belgium, with the German Zollverein, and with Austria. He then turned to the subject of the National Debt, and pleaded earnestly for the importance of making a more serious effort towards paying it off. Referring to Sir Roderick Murchison, Dr. Percy, Mr. Stanley Jevons, and other scientific authorities, he warned the country that the supply of coal would probably be exhausted in a hundred years, and that the consequent diminution of productive power

would be enormous. This prediction, though supported in debate by Mr. Mill, was generally regarded as fantastic. But it was revived many years afterwards by Mr. Jevons, and it cannot be said to have ever been refuted. He then propounded a scheme by which, beginning with a sum of half a million a year, debt to the amount of fifty millions would have been extinguished by 1905. But he did not remain in office long enough to carry this plan into effect. On May 7, Gladstone fulfilled his promise to the House by bringing in a Redistribution Bill. By grouping the small boroughs and taking away one member each from several of them, he obtained forty-nine seats, which, without altering the number of the House, he distributed among the larger towns, the more populous divisions of counties, Scotland, and the University of London. On May 14 the Bill was unanimously read a second time.

On the 28th, which had been fixed for the Committee of the Reform Bill, the serious troubles of the Government began. Sir Rainald Knightley, afterwards Lord Knightley, carried against Ministers, by a majority of ten, an instruction to include in the Bill provisions for dealing with bribery. Captain Hayter, afterwards Sir Arthur Hayter, then moved an amendment against the system of grouping in the Redistribution Bill, which had been referred

to the same Committee as the Reform Bill; but Gladstone, after a protest against obstruction, declared that he did not regard the principle of grouping as vital, and the amendment was not pressed. Then came the tug of war. Lord Dunkellin, an inmate of the Cave, moved in Committee to substitute rating for rental as a qualification for the franchise. Gladstone opposed this on the double ground that it would give the assessors of rates control over the suffrage, and that it would much diminish the number of new voters. But on June 18 the amendment was carried by a majority of eleven, and on the 19th Lord Russell's Government resigned. The Queen was unwilling to accept their resignation—first, because she regarded the question on which they had been defeated as one of detail; and, secondly, because foreign politics were disturbed by the imminence of war between Austria and Prussia. Ministers, however, succeeded in overcoming her Majesty's scruples, and, on June 26, Gladstone defended in the House of Commons the course which they had taken. His reasons were mainly two. He said that the only alternative to resignation was the frank acceptance of the amendment, and that the Cabinet had entirely failed to find any practicable means of carrying it out. He further stated that the measure, as originally drawn,

was smaller than the Bill of 1860, and that the Government could not consent to any further diminution of it. The Queen sent for Lord Derby, who became, for the third time, Prime Minister, with Mr. Disraeli once more Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons.

Meanwhile, the popular enthusiasm for Reform had become intense. On June 27, 10,000 Londoners assembled in Trafalgar Square and marched in procession to Gladstone's house. Gladstone himself was not at home; but Mrs. Gladstone, in response to calls, appeared on the balcony, and there was tumultuous cheering. On July 23 a great procession of Reformers marched to Hyde Park. The police, by direction from the Home Office, closed the gates and endeavoured to exclude them. But the crowd broke down the railings and entered the park in triumph. Both Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli, having taken office, calmly declared that they had never been opposed to the principle of Reform, and that they had just as good a right to deal with it as their political opponents. Gladstone replied, at Salisbury, by saying that he would give an impartial consideration to any plan they might propose. Little surprise was therefore felt when a paragraph in the Queen's Speech for 1867 announced another Reform Bill. But there was some laughter when, on Feb-

ruary 11, Mr. Disraeli expressed the opinion that Reform should no longer be allowed to determine the fate of Cabinets. He added that, by way of taking the House of Commons into their confidence, the Government would propose resolutions which might be freely discussed before introducing a Bill. The resolutions themselves were colourless, and did not satisfy the public curiosity. But on February 25 Disraeli announced that he should propose four kinds of franchise.

The first was educational, giving votes to graduates and members of the learned professions; the second took the possession of £30 in a savings bank for a year as the title to a vote; the third gave the franchise to every one who had £50 in the public funds; and the fourth, to every one who paid 20s. of direct taxes. There was to be a £6 rating franchise in the boroughs, and a £20 franchise in counties. There was to be machinery for punishing cases of bribery, and corrupt boroughs were to be disfranchised and the seats given to other towns, with the University of London. Gladstone complained that this plan would not give the suffrage to more than half as many persons as his own measure which had just been defeated. On February 26 there was a Liberal meeting at Gladstone's house, and it was decided that Gladstone should

demand a Bill in place of the resolutions. But the same night the Government gave way on this point, and a Bill was promised for March 18. On the 4th were announced the resignations of Lord Carnarvon, Lord Cranborne (formerly Lord Robert Cecil), and General Peel. On the 18th, Disraeli introduced the Bill, which explained the resignations. Every ratepaying householder was now to have a vote. But this, as soon appeared, was a very different thing from household suffrage. The educational franchise was preserved, with the qualifications of the savings bank and the funds. So was the £1 of direct taxes, but it was specified that these were not to include licences. This was to meet a remark of Mr. Bright's, that the clause would enfranchise a rat-catcher who kept four dogs. Dual voting was introduced, two votes being given to every householder whose direct taxes amounted to £1. The franchise in counties was to be £15, not £20. The redistribution, such as it was, was the same; there were to be voting-papers for lazy electors. This was the famous "ten-minutes Bill," as it was called, after the very candid speech in which Sir John Pakington, afterwards Lord Hampton, explained to his constituents the desperate hurry in which it had been concocted. Gladstone at once protested against the principle of dual

voting, and insisted upon votes being given to lodgers as well as to compound householders. On March 25, Disraeli moved the second reading of the Bill, and Gladstone took the opportunity of asking what concessions the Government were prepared to make in Committee. Disraeli replied that he would not be unreasonable, which was understood to mean that he would be flexible, and the Bill was read a second time without a division. But dual voting was dropped so early as April 1.

On the 5th there was another meeting at Gladstone's house, when it was arranged that Mr. Coleridge, afterwards Lord Chief Justice of England, should move an instruction to the Committee which would have the effect of enlarging the number of householders enfranchised. But in consequence of a protest made at what was called the "Tea-room meeting," part of this instruction was dropped, and Mr. Coleridge only moved that the Committee should have power to deal with rating. This Disraeli accepted, and Gladstone thereupon moved in the Committee that all householders should have votes, whether their rates were paid for them or not. This amendment was rejected by a majority of twenty-one. The blow to Gladstone's authority, as leader of the Opposition, was rather serious, and in reply

to a letter from one of his supporters, Mr. Crawford, member for the City, he intimated that he should not move his other amendments. But during the Easter recess a number of meetings were held to demand a thoroughgoing reform, and on May 2 the process of enlarging the Bill was begun. Mr. Ayrton carried, by a majority of eighty-one, an amendment reducing the period of qualification from two years to twelve months. Mr. Torrens moved to enfranchise all lodgers, and the Government agreed to enfranchise all whose rooms were worth £10 a year unfurnished. Mr. Hodgkinson moved, Gladstone supported, and Disraeli accepted an amendment which enfranchised all householders by the simple but, as it proved, highly inconvenient process of abolishing the system under which a landlord was permitted to compound for the rates of his small tenants. This was the principle of Gladstone's rejected amendment in another form. The county franchise was further lowered from £15 to £12, the educational franchise was given up, and the investment franchise followed it. Mr. Laing carried, by fifty-seven votes, a scheme of redistribution more thorough than the Government's, and Mr. Torrens succeeded in getting rid of voting by papers. Lord Cranborne, in an incisive speech, pointed out that the Bill, as it left the House of

Commons, was not Disraeli's but Gladstone's. Gladstone, he said, had demanded and obtained, first, the lodger franchise; secondly, the abolition of distinction between compounders and non-compounders; thirdly, a provision to prevent traffic in votes; fourthly, the omission of the taxing franchise; fifthly, the omission of the dual vote; sixthly, the enlargement of the distribution of seats; seventhly, the reduction of the county franchise; eighthly, the omission of voting-papers; ninthly and tenthly, the omission of the educational and savings-bank franchises. Mr. Mill observed that when Disraeli told the working classes that he had given them the vote, they replied, "Thank you, Mr. Gladstone;" and when the Bill reached the House of Lords, where it was very little altered, the Duke of Buccleuch declared that the only part of it due to her Majesty's Government was the introductory word "Whereas."

On November 19, Parliament met for an Autumn Session to vote supplies for the Abyssinian Expedition. Gladstone admitted that there was a good cause for war, but protested against territorial aggrandizement and the assumption of new political responsibilities. He did not object to the extra penny on the Income tax to pay for the expedition, but when the tax was further raised from 5d. to

6d. he strongly condemned the extravagance of the Government. The session was continued over Christmas by adjournment; and on February 19, 1868, Gladstone moved the second reading of a Bill to abolish compulsory Church rates. It was read a second time without a division, passed the House of Lords, and became law, thus putting an end to a very long and very obstinate dispute. On February 26, Lord Derby resigned, from failing health, and the most brilliant of political adventurers became Prime Minister of England. But Disraeli had to govern as best he could with a minority, and he was constantly defeated in the House of Commons. On the Scottish Reform Bill, Mr. Baxter, supported by Gladstone, carried an amendment which saved the members of the House from being increased, and provided for the disfranchisement of more small boroughs in England; and Mr. Bouverie succeeded in omitting the payment of rates as a condition of the franchise in Scotland. But more important victories of the Liberal party were at hand.

CHAPTER X.

THE IRISH CHURCH.

ON March 16, an Irish member, Mr. Maguire, moved that the House should go into Committee to consider the state of Ireland. The debate lasted for four nights, and on the fourth night Gladstone expressed the opinion that the Irish Church as a State Church must cease to exist. This declaration produced immense excitement, and Mr. Maguire, more than satisfied, withdrew his motion. On the 23rd, Gladstone gave notice of three resolutions, declaring that the Church of Ireland should be disestablished and disendowed, and the exercise of public patronage in it at once suspended to avoid the creation of new vested interests. Instead of meeting these resolutions with a direct negative, or with the previous question, Lord Stanley, on behalf of Ministers, merely proposed an amendment that the subject should be left for the new Parliament to deal with. On March 30, Gladstone moved that the House should

go into Committee on his resolutions, and in his speech explained his own personal attitude. He had never, he said, since 1846 adhered to the principle of the Irish Establishment, and it was his refusal to do so in the debate on Mr. Dillwyn's motion that lost him his seat for Oxford. He explained that his policy was to pass only a suspensory Bill in that Parliament, leaving the whole question of disestablishment and disendowment to be decided by the next. After a long debate, and a reply from Gladstone, in which he pointed out that concurrent endowment was too late, Lord Stanley's amendment was rejected by a majority of sixty; and by a majority of fifty-six the House determined to go into Committee on the resolutions. There was by this time a great deal of interest out of doors, and meetings on both sides were held during the Easter recess. At one of them, in St. James's Hall, Lord Russell, who had retired from the leadership of the Liberal Party the previous Christmas, presided, and spoke strongly in favour of Irish disestablishment, adding an eloquent eulogy of Gladstone as his successor.

On April 27, Gladstone moved his first resolution in favour of disestablishment, and argued that, so far as the Church of England was concerned, a bad establishment did not strengthen, but weakened,



Photo by Poulton.

A FAMILY GROUP AT HAWARDEN.

Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, Mr. W. H. Gladstone, Mr. Drew, and three of the grandchildren

a good one. After three nights' debate the resolution was carried by a majority of sixty-five, and Disraeli asked for time to reconsider the position of the Government. On May 4 he made a rather obscure statement in the House of Commons, which was understood to mean that he had offered the Queen the alternative of dissolving Parliament in the autumn or of accepting his resignation. Her Majesty had refused the resignation, but had given her assent to an autumn dissolution. Strong protests were made, especially by Mr. Bright, against bringing in the Queen's name and implying that she had expressed an opinion as between two policies suggested by her Minister. Gladstone also strenuously objected to holding a dissolution over the House as a menace, and threatening that if it voted against the Government again it would be forthwith dissolved. His remaining resolutions were adopted without a division, and, in reply to the third, her Majesty assented to placing her own patronage in the Irish Church at the disposal of Parliament. On May 23, Gladstone moved the reading of the suspensory Bill, explaining that with disestablishment the Maynooth grant to the Catholics and the *Regium donum* to the Presbyterians would cease. The second reading was carried by a majority of fifty-four. But in the

House of Lords, where Lord Carnarvon supported it, and Lord Salisbury, who had recently succeeded his father, opposed it, it was rejected by ninety-five.

Parliament was prorogued on July 31, and dissolved on November 11, the registration having been accelerated by statute so as to enable the new electors to vote. The great question before the country was the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and the popular verdict, the first taken under household suffrage, was decisive, the Liberal majority being 115. Disraeli, making a new and sensible precedent, resigned without meeting the new Parliament, and on December 4 Gladstone was summoned to Windsor. He had been defeated in South-west Lancashire by Mr. Cross, afterwards Lord Cross, but elected at the same time for Greenwich. By December 9 his Government was complete. The Cave had been broken up by the Conservative Reform Bill, and Mr. Lowe, who eagerly supported the disestablishment of the Irish Church, became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Bright, who had refused the India Office, entered a Cabinet and a Government for the first time as President of the Board of Trade. Lord Russell refused a seat in the Cabinet without office, and Sir George Grey declined to join the new Administration. Sir Roundell Palmer refused the

woolsack because he objected to the disendowment, though not to the disestablishment, of the Church in Ireland. The new Chancellor was Sir William Page Wood, now created Lord Hatherley. The Government was, on the whole, a remarkably strong one, and Gladstone was especially fortunate in securing for the War Office the services of Mr. Cardwell, afterwards Lord Cardwell, who was probably, with the exception of Sir James Graham and himself, the ablest of all the administrators trained under Sir Robert Peel. Gladstone's eldest son, William Henry, member for Whitby, and afterwards for East Worcestershire, became a Junior Lord of the Treasury. Mr. W. H. Gladstone died before his father, in 1891.

CHAPTER XI.

PRIME MINISTER.

THE life of a Prime Minister is the history of England, and the history of England cannot be told here. An attempt must be made to separate and distinguish those measures and acts of policy with which Gladstone, whether in office or opposition, was directly and personally concerned. The chief business of the session of 1869, the disestablishment of the Irish Church, was emphatically his own. Parliament met on February 16, and on March 1 Gladstone introduced the Irish Church Bill in a speech which, by the admission of Mr. Disraeli, did not contain a superfluous word. The Bill provided for the immediate disendowment of the Church, and for its disestablishment as from January 1, 1871. The Church was hereafter to govern itself, and the governing body was to be incorporated. There was to be full compensation for vested interests, but the Irish bishops were to lose at once the few seats which they held by rotation in

the House of Lords. The Church was to retain all private endowments bestowed since the year 1660. The Maynooth grant to Catholics and the *Regium donum* to Presbyterians were to be commuted. The tenants of Church lands were to have the right of pre-emption. This clause, due to Mr. Bright and known by his name, was the origin of the many Land Purchase Acts which have since been passed for Ireland. The funds of the Church were not to be used for any ecclesiastical purpose, but for the relief of unavoidable calamity and suffering. This was the only part of the Bill which underwent any serious alteration in Parliament. The second reading was fixed for March 18, when Mr. Disraeli moved its rejection. It was carried by a majority of 118, and passed easily through Committee. On May 31 it was read a third time, by a majority of 114, and sent to the House of Lords. The Conservative majority of that House were divided in opinion. Lord Cairns, the titular leader, and a strong Irish Protestant, was for rejecting the Bill. But Lord Salisbury and Lord Carnarvon supported the second reading, on the ground that the question had been directly decided by the constituencies of the United Kingdom. After a long and eloquent debate—in which the best speeches, except, perhaps, the swan-song of Lord Derby, were

made by Bishop Magee against the Bill, and by Bishop Thirlwall in its favour—the second reading was carried by thirty-three votes. Great changes were, however, made in Committee; with almost all of these the House of Commons, by large majorities, refused to agree. For some time there was serious danger that the Bill would be lost. But Lord Cairns, having done his best to defeat the Bill and failed, set himself with great ability to obtain the most favourable terms he could get from a Government too strong to be resisted. The Queen also, through Archbishop Tait, intervened on behalf of a peaceful settlement. The result, however, was that the Bill passed substantially as it left the Commons, with one most important exception. By an amendment, which Lord Cairns moved, and which the Government ultimately accepted, the funds of the Church were applied, not to the exclusive relief of suffering, but to such purposes as Parliament might direct. As a matter of fact, they have scarcely ever been employed in the relief of suffering at all; but they have played a most valuable part in the development of Irish agriculture and industry. Thus altered, the Bill received the Royal Assent on July 26.

In the autumn of this year Gladstone excited the bitter resentment of orthodox Churchmen, with

whom he was himself in complete doctrinal agreement, by appointing Dr. Temple, Headmaster of Rugby, Bishop of Exeter. Dr. Temple had contributed to the volume called "Essays and Reviews," which Convocation condemned as heretical, though the only two essays which were made the subject of proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Courts had been pronounced by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to be harmless. The protests made against this appointment were exceedingly violent, and some members of the Chapter braved the penalties of præmunire by voting against the nominee of the Crown. But Gladstone's best justification is, that neither in 1885, when he himself nominated Dr. Temple to the Bishopric of London, nor in 1896, when Lord Salisbury nominated him to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, was the faintest objection raised from any quarter whatever. Although Gladstone made Dr. Fraser Bishop of Manchester, and Dr. Bradley Dean of Westminster, he gave the High Church Party at least their share in the dignities and emoluments of the Church. In 1869 appeared "Juventus Mundi," prematurely called by Mr. Lowe "Senectus Gladstoni," which partly summarized and partly developed Gladstone's larger treatise on Homer, published eleven years before.

The session of 1870 was partially, as the session

of 1869 had been wholly, an Irish one. On February 15, Gladstone introduced his first Irish Land Bill, a mild and moderate measure, founded on the report of the Devon Commission, which had been issued five-and-twenty years before. The Bill gave legal effect to the Ulster custom—in other words, to tenant-right in the northern counties of Ireland—and, under conditions, to other similar customs elsewhere. It gave the tenant compensation for disturbance, if he had been evicted for any other reason than not paying his rent. It also gave him compensation for improvements, and reversed in his favour the old presumption that they had been made by the landlord. It authorized the issue of loans from the Treasury for enabling the tenants to purchase their holdings, thus carrying a step further the policy of the Bright clauses. The second reading was not seriously opposed, and only eleven members were found to vote against it. The Lords altered it a good deal in Committee; but they abandoned most of their amendments on report, and the Bill passed substantially as it was brought in. With the great Education Bill of this year, which established School Boards and compulsory attendance throughout the country, Gladstone had little to do. He left it almost entirely to Mr. Forster, though he occasionally made con-

cessions to the Church, which seriously offended Dissenters. He was, in truth, a Denominationalist, and had no sympathy with the unsectarian teaching of religion given in Board Schools.

The great event of 1870 was the war between Prussia and France. The British Government preserved a strict neutrality. But when the Draft Treaty between Count Bismarck and Monsieur Benedetti was published in the *Times* on July 25, ten days after the outbreak of the war, Gladstone and Lord Granville, who had just succeeded Lord Clarendon as Foreign Secretary, entered into negotiations with both the belligerent Powers for maintaining the independence of Belgium. The Draft Treaty, a scandalous document, communicated to the *Times* by Bismarck himself, purported to assure France of Prussia's aid in the conquest of Belgium, whose neutrality had been under a joint European guarantee since 1839. On August 9 and 11 respectively, Russia and France both pledged themselves to England that this neutrality should be respected, as, in the result, it was. But the only step which the Government asked the House of Commons to take was an increase of the Army Estimates by two millions sterling and 20,000 men. In October of this year Gladstone took what was for a Prime Minister the singular course of con-

tributing to the *Edinburgh Review* an article on England, France, and Germany. In it he freely criticized the conduct of both foreign Powers, defended his own Government, and congratulated the country on being divided from the complication of Continental politics by "the streak of silver sea which travellers so often and so justly execrate." We know, on Gladstone's own authority, that this was the only article written by him which he intended to be, in fact as well as in form, anonymous. But anonymity is difficult for Prime Ministers. The authorship was disclosed by the *Daily News* on November 5.

The administrative history of this year is important. On August 31 all the public departments, except the Foreign Office and the Education Office, were opened to competition. At the same time the dual control of the War Office and the Horse Guards was abolished—the Commander-in-Chief being for the first time placed under the Secretary of State. Halfpenny postcards were introduced, of which no one made more lavish use than the Prime Minister himself. Just before the end of the year Gladstone announced the release of all the Fenian prisoners in English jails on the condition that they remained for the rest of their lives outside the United Kingdom. The condition was severely

criticized, and it may be doubted whether the discharged convicts would not have been less dangerous to England in Ireland than they became in the United States.

The year 1871 opened with the Black Sea Conference, which met in London on January 17. It was called to consider the clause in the Treaty of Paris which provided for the neutralization of the Black Sea. This the Czar announced his intention of repudiating. Gladstone was accused of allowing Russia to tear up the treaty, but, as a matter of fact, Lord Granville declined to recognize the right claimed by Russia, and it was the Conference which put an end to a restriction which could not have been permanently enforced against a Great Power.

The first and chief business of the session was the Army Regulation Bill, which, among other things, abolished the purchase of commissions in the Army. The Bill was strenuously resisted by the military members of the House, and "the Colonels," as they were called, initiated the system of obstruction, which was afterwards more artistically developed by the Irish members. In the House of Lords the Bill was met by a dilatory motion demanding a more complete scheme of Army Reform. This, after a violent speech from Lord Salisbury, was carried by a majority of twenty-five. Two days afterwards Glad-

stone announced in the House of Commons, in reply to Sir George Grey, that purchase had been abolished by Royal Warrant, and would be illegal after November 1. Thus the only result of the Lords refusing to proceed with the Bill would be that officers would not get the compensation which it provided. In these circumstances the Bill passed. The Lords consoled themselves with passing a vote of censure on the Government, which had no effect at all. Some Radicals, however, represented by Mr. Fawcett, denounced the use of the prerogative, even for purposes of which they approved; while so moderate a Liberal as Sir Roundell Palmer, not then a member of the Government, supported it as the only practicable course. As a matter of strict law, the Queen did not act on this occasion by virtue of her prerogative as the head of the Army, but under the powers of a statute passed in 1779.

This year Gladstone succeeded in passing the University Tests Bill, which had long been before Parliament, and which opened the prizes of the Universities to men of all creeds. Speaking on the Women's Suffrage Bill of Mr. Jacob Bright, Gladstone made the rather surprising admission that he would not object to women voting if the ballot were introduced. To this isolated expression of opinion

he never gave any practical effect. On the other hand, he made a strong and uncompromising speech against Mr. Miall's motion for the disestablishment of the Church of England.

In May of this year the Treaty of Washington, between England and the United States, was signed. The purport of it was to submit to arbitration the claims of the American Government for damages caused by the *Alabama* and other cruisers fitted out at British ports during the Civil War. This Commission was appointed by Gladstone, who put at the head of it Earl de Grey, created, for his services, Marquis of Ripon; and included in it his political opponent, though personal friend, Sir Stafford Northcote. The Commissioners agreed upon three rules which practically concluded the case against England, so far as the *Alabama* was concerned, and which had not previously been an undisputed part of international law. But the treaty, though open to technical criticism, was substantially just, and put an end to a very dangerous state of feeling between the two kindred nations.

Gladstone and his Lord Chancellor, Lord Hatherley, incurred much unpopularity by the appointment, during the recess, of Sir Robert Collier, afterwards Lord Monkswell, to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. It was not denied

that Sir Robert Collier, then Attorney-General, was a competent lawyer, and, as a matter of fact, he made an excellent judge. But the statute under which he was appointed provided that a paid member of the Judicial Committee must be or have been a judge of a superior court. Sir Robert Collier was accordingly made a Judge of the Common Pleas for two days, that he might be technically qualified. Chief Justice Cockburn and Chief Justice Bovill vehemently protested against what they called an evasion of the law; but Mr. Justice Willes, a lawyer of profound learning, maintained that nothing illegal or irregular was done.

Soon after Parliament rose Gladstone delivered at Aberdeen a speech which was often used against him in future years. Referring to the Irish demand for Home Rule, which then came from only a small section of the Irish people, he said that if given to Ireland it must be given also to Scotland, and asked if they were prepared to make themselves ridiculous by disintegrating the great capital institutions of the country. In October he met his constituents at Greenwich, who were dissatisfied partly with his neglect of their interests, and partly with the discharge by the Government of labourers from the dockyards. He spoke for two hours in the open air to an audience estimated at 20,000. At first there

was so much noise and so much hostile demonstration that he could not be heard. But in a few minutes he put the interrupters to silence, and at the close of his speech he received a practically unanimous vote of confidence. Both physically and intellectually this was one of his greatest achievements.

When Parliament met in 1872, Sir Robert Collier's case was brought before both Houses, and votes of censure were moved. The motion was rejected in the House of Commons by twenty-seven, and in the House of Lords by two votes. Though the Lord Chancellor explained that two judges had refused the post, and Sir Roundell Palmer supported the Government, the result was damaging to the Ministry and especially to Gladstone himself. The bad effect was increased by his appointment of Mr. Harvey to the Rectory of Ewelme. The patronage of Ewelme was in the Crown, but it was a necessary qualification of the incumbent that he should be a member of Convocation at Oxford. Mr. Harvey was a graduate of Cambridge, and was admitted to the Oxford Convocation for the purpose of enabling him to take the living. Gladstone argued in the House of Commons that he had no control over the University, and that he was not responsible for its admission of Mr. Harvey, whose politics were the

reverse of his own. But the two transactions, taken together, produced the impression that the Prime Minister was too much inclined to evade the law. The chief measure of this session was the Ballot Bill, which the Lords had rejected the previous year, and which they now passed with an amendment limiting its operation to the year 1880. Since that date it has been annually included without objection in the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill.

But the most important event of the year was the sitting of the Arbitrators at Geneva to determine the *Alabama* Claims. This was the first international arbitration of serious importance. Its value as a precedent was inestimable, and it will always be associated with Gladstone's name. The President of this great court was Count Sclopis, an Italian jurist. The British arbitrator was Chief Justice Cockburn, and the leading counsel for this country was Sir Roundell Palmer. A preliminary difficulty almost proved fatal to the arbitration. The Cabinet of President Grant put forward extravagant proposals of compensation for incidents alleged to arise out of privateering, which the British Government declined to recognize. For some days there was a serious deadlock. But at last the indirect claims, as they were called, were withdrawn at the voluntary suggestion of the arbitrators, and the case

proceeded. The United States had demanded a sum exceeding nine millions sterling. The majority of the arbitrators awarded them three millions and a quarter, in respect of losses inflicted by the *Alabama*, the *Florida*, and the *Shenandoah*. Chief Justice Cockburn, in an elaborate judgment, dissented from this award, holding that England was liable for the *Alabama* only. But he earnestly recommended that the decision of his colleagues should be accepted, and the money was paid.

In the autumn of this year the Government received a great accession of strength by the appointment of Sir Roundell Palmer to be Lord Chancellor, with the title of Lord Selborne, in the room of Lord Hatherley, who retired on account of ill-health. Gladstone's principal utterance outside Parliament was a powerful and eloquent address to the students of Liverpool College, in which he combated the sceptical theories of the time as embodied in Dr. Strauss's recent volume, "The Old Faith and the New."

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONSERVATIVE REACTION.

IN 1873, Gladstone proceeded to deal with the third branch of the Irish Question, and on February 13, in an exhaustive speech of three hours, produced his Irish University Bill. The difficulty, which remains a difficulty still, was that the Irish Catholics, with few exceptions, refused to let their sons matriculate at the Protestant University of Dublin. The Bill proposed to meet their scruples by forming a new university, of which Trinity College should be the centre, but which would contain also other affiliated colleges. The expenses of this university would be defrayed by annual grants of £12,000 from Trinity College and £10,000 from the Consolidated Fund. The first Council or governing body was to be appointed by Parliament, but vacancies in it were to be filled by the Crown. There were to be no religious tests, but, on the other hand, there were to be no chairs of Theology, Philosophy, or Modern History, and no compulsory

examinations in these subjects. Some extraordinary provisions, which came to be known as "the gagging clauses," imposed penalties upon any teacher who offended the religious convictions of his pupils. The reception of the Bill, largely owing to the effect of Gladstone's eloquence, was favourable. But before the second reading, which was postponed for three weeks, serious obstacles arose. The Catholic Bishops of Ireland declared themselves dissatisfied with the measure; while English Radicals, especially Mr. Fawcett, bitterly denounced the gagging clauses and the restrictions upon the teaching of philosophy and history. Although Gladstone defended the Bill with a force and ingenuity seldom surpassed, the second reading was rejected by three votes, and the Government at once resigned.

The Queen sent for Mr. Disraeli, who, however, refused to take office without a majority, and persisted in his refusal although the Queen gave him the option of dissolving Parliament. Gladstone contended that it was Disraeli's constitutional duty to accept office after defeating the Government. Disraeli replied that there was no adequate cause for the resignation of the Government, and a controversial correspondence of much historical importance was carried on by the two statesmen, each of them addressing himself in form to the Queen. In the

end Disraeli had his way, and Gladstone resumed office with weakened credit. The Irish University question was settled for the time by the passing of Mr. Fawcett's Bill abolishing religious tests in the University of Dublin. On Mr. Trevelyan's annual motion for household suffrage in counties, Mr. Forster read a letter from the Prime Minister, who was prevented by illness from being present, pronouncing for the first time in favour of that reform, which he carried out eleven years afterwards. During the autumn several changes were made in the Government. Lord Ripon retired on account of his health, and Mr. Bruce, who had not been successful at the Home Office, succeeded him as President of the Council, with the title of Lord Aberdare. Mr. Lowe, who had been unpopular ever since his abortive Match Tax, was transferred to the Home Office, and Gladstone himself took the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.

His acceptance of this office raised a grave constitutional question, which was never finally decided. Before the Reform Act of 1867 the acceptance of any office of profit under the Crown vacated the seat of the acceptor. By that Act it was provided that a Minister already holding such an office should not vacate his seat if he accepted another in lieu of it. It was clear, therefore, that Mr. Lowe did not

vacate his seat on becoming Home Secretary instead of Chancellor of the Exchequer. But Gladstone took a new office without giving up an old one. He remained First Lord of the Treasury as well as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and eminent lawyers were of opinion that he had ceased to be member for Greenwich. He did not, however, take that view himself, and did not seek re-election. The question would have been raised when Parliament met, and, according to Lord Selborne's "Posthumous Memoirs," it was one of the reasons for the sudden dissolution of January 1874. On the 24th of that month the public were startled to find in the newspapers a long address from Gladstone to his constituents, announcing that Parliament would be dissolved on the 26th. His ostensible reasons for this step were: first, that since Disraeli's refusal of office there was not the proper constitutional check of a possible alternative Government in that House of Commons; and, secondly, that the by-elections did not show the confidence of the country in the Ministers of the Crown. Proceeding to deal with the Income Tax, he pointed out that Mr. Lowe had reduced it from 6d. to 3d., and he calculated that, with a surplus of five millions and a half, he would be able to abolish it altogether. He also offered a grant in aid of local rates, which

the House of Commons had, by a majority of 100, voted for against him, and some reduction of indirect taxes. These promises would have more than exhausted the surplus; but Gladstone believed that the balance would have been provided by greater economy in the public service.

Disraeli at once replied to this manifesto in an address to the electors of Buckinghamshire. He taunted Gladstone with being afraid to defend his conduct in retaining his seat, and sarcastically observed that any Chancellor of the Exchequer with a surplus would employ it in remitting taxation. He afterwards declined to give a specific pledge that if returned to power he would give up the Income Tax. At this election, the first under the ballot, the Conservative majority was estimated at forty-six. But as this calculation combined Irish Home Rulers with British Liberals, it underrated the Conservative strength. Gladstone retained his seat for Greenwich, but was elected as junior colleague to a gin-distiller. Following the precedent set by Mr. Disraeli in 1868, the Prime Minister resigned office without meeting Parliament, and his rival succeeded him.

CHAPTER XIII.

REST, AND BE THANKFUL.

AT the beginning of the session, on March 12, Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville, the leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords, intimating that he could not long remain at the head of the Opposition, that he wished for comparative repose, and that if the Party desired a chief who would attend more assiduously to the business of the House of Commons, he was quite ready to resign at once. He was, however, induced to defer his retirement for a time. During the session of 1874 he opposed the Endowed Schools Bill, the Public Worship Bill, and the Bill for abolishing private patronage in the Church of Scotland. On this last measure he delivered an historical review, pointing out that the question was the one on which the Free Church had seceded in 1843, and arguing that the Bill would give a powerful impetus to disestablishment in Scotland. The Bill easily passed; but he succeeded in defeating the more

important part of the Endowed Schools Bill, which proposed to abolish the Endowed Schools Commission, and to restore to the Church of England certain schools which had been placed under secular management. The work of the Endowed Schools Commissioners, whom Gladstone had appointed, and of whom Lord Lyttelton was the chief, was transferred to the Charity Commissioners, who had quite enough to do without it, and this part of the Bill passed. But Gladstone fought so strongly against the reactionary nature of the clauses clericalizing schools, and made such a powerful plea for continuity in legislation, that Mr. Disraeli discovered his inability to understand the clauses, and they were dropped.

But the Bill which interested Gladstone most was the Public Worship Bill. This was not a Government measure. It was introduced into the House of Lords by Archbishop Tait, and severely criticized by Lord Salisbury, then Secretary of State for India. In the House of Commons the second reading was moved by Mr. Russell Gurney, the Recorder of London. It was exceedingly popular on both sides of the House, and Disraeli warmly supported it, declaring that its object was "to put down Ritualism." Gladstone attacked the Bill in a long, eloquent, and elaborate speech, which

may be described as the case against Erastianism. He pleaded for reasonable liberty within the Church, and he declared that, during his forty years of public life, Ritualism had had a different meaning in every one of them. He ended by giving notice of six resolutions. Of these the most important was the last, which pronounced that the Government should consult representatives of the Church before introducing ecclesiastical legislation. On this occasion Gladstone's party declined to follow him. The Bill was read a second time without a division, and the resolutions were never moved. The Bill, which became an Act before the end of the session, provided a new Ecclesiastical Court, in which three aggrieved parishioners might, with the consent of the Bishop, prosecute a beneficed clergyman for irregularities of ritual. A conflict arose between the two Houses over an amendment which the House of Commons carried, and which gave the aggrieved parishioners an appeal from the Bishop of the Diocese to the Archbishop of the Province. This amendment the Lords rejected, after a violent attack on it by Lord Salisbury, and rather than lose the Bill the Commons gave way; but the debate was a very heated one. Sir William Harcourt, always staunchly Erastian, disavowed the policy of his leader, and called upon Mr. Disraeli

to vindicate the rights of the House. Gladstone replied to his former colleague in a masterpiece of sarcastic irony, and Mr. Disraeli retorted upon Lord Salisbury in language seldom used to one member of the Cabinet by another. The Act cannot be said to have succeeded in its object. It was not, like the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, a dead letter from the first. Many Ritualistic clergymen were brought before Lord Penzance, the new ecclesiastical judge, and several of them were imprisoned for contumacy. But while, on the one hand, these proceedings led to a series of rather scandalous conflicts between the ecclesiastical and civil tribunals, it was felt, on the other hand, that the punishments inflicted were altogether inappropriate to the nature of the offences proved. The Bishops gradually ceased to allow any further prosecutions, and the statute fell into complete disuse.

During the Parliamentary recess Gladstone published in the *Contemporary Review* an essay on Ritualism, in which he surprised every one by a trenchant attack on the Church of Rome. Commenting upon the allegation that Ritualism led to Romanism, he said that there had never been a time when the Roman Church presented less attraction to converts. She had, he declared, substituted for her proud boast of *semper eadem* a

policy of violence and change in faith; nor could any man now enter her communion without placing his loyalty and civil allegiance at the mercy of another. This reference to the dogma of Papal Infallibility, which Pius IX. had proclaimed four years before, elicited numerous replies from English Catholics. Gladstone, dropping the subject of Ritualism altogether, issued a special pamphlet on the Vatican Decrees, in which he reiterated and supported his statements. To this pamphlet many answers were written, of which the most important were Dr. Newman's, Dr. Manning's, and Lord Acton's. But the champions of the Church of Rome did not agree amongst themselves. Dr. Manning earnestly defended the dogma of Infallibility, Dr. Newman reluctantly submitted to it, and Lord Acton repudiated it altogether. A schism among the English Catholics ensued, which divided even members of the same family, and some Old Catholics, as they called themselves, were excommunicated. In the course of the controversy several Catholic laymen took occasion to declare that they were as loyal subjects and as good patriots as any of their Protestant fellow-citizens. Gladstone, in another pamphlet, entitled "Vaticanism," expressed his satisfaction at these assurances, and his pleasure at having called them forth. With that the dis-

cussion closed; but many Englishmen who were not Catholics held that the matter was one with which Protestants had no concern, and that a man who had been Prime Minister of England should abstain from attacking the Church to which so many of her Majesty's subjects belonged.

During the autumn of this year Gladstone received at Hawarden a deputation of strikers from the Aston Hall Collieries, and gravely remonstrated with them for refusing to work with men who were not members of their trade union. His plea for individual freedom prevailed, and the unionists withdrew their demand that the non-unionists should be discharged.

At the beginning of 1875, Gladstone, in another letter to Lord Granville, intimated that the time had now come when he must formally relinquish the leadership of the Liberal Party. His resignation was regretfully accepted, and Lord Hartington was chosen to succeed him. During the session of this year he was not much seen in the House of Commons.

Mr. Disraeli correctly interpreted his recent victory as meaning that the country desired repose, and had no wish for large measures. Gladstone had exhausted the energies of the nation, and seemed for a time to have almost exhausted his

own. The Government of 1868 is perhaps the only one that has been turned out for doing too much. The one important contribution made by Gladstone to Parliamentary debate in 1875 was his severe criticism of the new Sinking Fund proposed by Sir Stafford Northcote, afterwards Lord Iddesleigh, the Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer. Sir Stafford showed courage as well as skill in defending himself against his old master, and this was the only financial discussion in which Gladstone took part without scoring an easy triumph.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EASTERN QUESTION.

IN the year 1876 the Eastern Question assumed a new and very serious aspect. Parliament met on February 8, and the Andrassy Note, drawn up by Count Andrassy, the Austrian Chancellor, in consultation with the Chancellors of Russia and Germany, had just been presented to the Porte. It proposed that the inhabitants of the Herzegovina, who had risen in rebellion the previous July, and whom the Sultan was unable to subdue, should be granted religious liberty, and that the farming of their taxes should be abolished. The British Government, after some hesitation, acceded to the terms of the Note, and Gladstone, in the debate on the Address, expressed his approval of this course. He took occasion to point out, as a surviving member of Lord Aberdeen's Cabinet, which made the Crimean War, that that contest was waged on behalf of European and not merely of British interests. On February 19 there was

a debate on the shares in the Suez Canal, which the Government had, on November 26, 1875, bought from the Khedive of Egypt for four millions sterling. The money was borrowed from Messrs. Rothschild, who received 15 per cent. for the accommodation. Gladstone, while not blaming the Rothschilds for taking what they could get, denounced this as an extravagant rate of interest where the security was perfect, and condemned the employment of a private firm for a public purpose. The case for the Government was that Ismail Pasha, being, as usual, in peculiar difficulties, would have sold the shares to some other Power if England had not bought them. Gladstone called upon Ministers to say what harm would have been done if he had. But the purchase was popular, and the money was granted without a division. From a commercial point of view this speculation has been most profitable. Politically it is the origin of the British occupation in Egypt and the Soudan. On March 9, Gladstone spoke against the Royal Titles Bill, which conferred upon the Queen the title Empress of India. He argued that the designation was unsuitable to a British monarch, inasmuch as it was not hereditary, but elective, and implied absolute power.

Before the end of the session there appeared in

the *Daily News* a series of letters describing horrible massacres and tortures which had been inflicted upon the inhabitants of Bulgaria by their Turkish rulers. The Prime Minister, when questioned on the subject, jeered at these narratives as "coffee-house babble," and in reference to the special charge that the Turks impaled their victims, cynically observed that Oriental governors usually disposed of culprits in a more expeditious manner. Parliament rose on August 15, and a few days afterwards appeared the official report of Mr. Baring, the British Consul, which entirely confirmed the correspondents of the *Daily News.* Gladstone was deeply stirred by these revelations, and on September 6 published a pamphlet called "Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East," which had a rapid and general sale. In this he demanded that the officers of the Porte, from the lowest to the highest, should be cleared "bag and baggage" out of the countries which they had desolated and destroyed. A few days afterwards, on the 9th, he addressed his constituents on Blackheath, and after a tremendous denunciation of Turkey, declared it to be the duty of England to act with Russia in securing the independence of the Sultan's Christian provinces. "Never again," he said, "while the years roll their course," must the

conscience of mankind be shocked by the misrule of the Turk in Bulgaria. Disraeli, who had now become Lord Beaconsfield, replied to those arguments at Aylesbury, and again, on Lord Mayor's Day, at the Guildhall. At Aylesbury he said that the conduct of those who made political capital out of the Turkish atrocities was worse than the guilt of those who committed them. At the Guildhall he made a bitter attack upon Servia, who, assisted by her neighbour Montenegro, had come to the rescue of their fellow-Christians, and had declared war on Turkey. The close of this speech was very warlike, and he used language which furnished the text of a once famous music-hall song. England, he declared, did not desire war, but no country was so well prepared for it, and her resources were such that she need not shrink from a second or even a third campaign. These two speeches of the Prime Minister excited great indignation among Liberals, and it was determined to hold a conference at St. James's Hall to protest against any further support of the Turkish Empire. The conference was held on December 8. But on November 20, Lord Salisbury left England for Constantinople, to take part with Sir Henry Elliot, the British Ambassador, in a consultation with the representatives of the other Great Powers on the state of

things in the Christian provinces of Turkey. Lord Salisbury was considered at that time far less Turkish in his sympathies than his chief, and the best hopes for the success of his mission were expressed in St. James's Hall. Clergymen and men of letters such as Dr. Liddon and Mr. Freeman attended this meeting, as well as practical politicians. The Duke of Westminster took the chair in the afternoon, and Lord Shaftesbury in the evening. A letter was read from Mr. Carlyle eulogizing Russia, and recommending that "the unspeakable Turk" should be struck out of the question. Gladstone spoke in the evening with careful moderation of tone, but emphatically asserted that the English people would be content with nothing less than the strict fulfilment of those duties to the Christian subjects of the Sultan which were the result of the Crimean War.

In 1876 appeared Gladstone's third book on Homer, "Homeric Synchronism," which is sufficiently described in its second title as "An Inquiry into the Time and Place of Homer in History."

The Conference at Constantinople lasted till January 20, 1877, when it broke up without result, Turkey having refused to accept the demands of the Powers. Early in the year Gladstone entered upon an active political campaign. He attacked

the Government, at Frome, for failing to discharge their obligations; and at Taunton, between two trains, he made the first of those wayside speeches which played afterwards so effective a part in English politics. At Taunton he dwelt on the failure of the Conference, and accused Turkey of having trodden the Treaty of Paris under her feet. Parliament met on February 8, and in the debate on the Address Gladstone, after compliments to Lord Salisbury on the line he had taken at Constantinople, pronounced the Eastern Question to be, without exception, the most solemn which the House of Commons had ever had to discuss. On the 16th he drew attention to Lord Derby's dispatch condemning the Bulgarian massacres, and asked what course the Government intended to adopt. The unexpected mildness of his speech led to a curious Parliamentary incident. After Mr. Gathorne Hardy had replied in a guarded manner to Gladstone's question, and the debate had proceeded for some time in a rather humdrum fashion, Mr. Chaplin suddenly interposed with a personal attack upon Mr. Gladstone, accusing him of making charges against his opponents behind their backs which he was afraid to repeat in the House of Commons. To give Gladstone an opportunity of replying, Mr. Chaplin moved the

adjournment of the House. Gladstone at once rose to second the motion, and in doing so delivered off-hand one of the most amusing as well as one of the most effective replies ever heard in the House of Commons. He overwhelmed Mr. Chaplin with ironic sarcasm and good-humoured banter, disposing, incidentally, of Lord George Hamilton, who had rashly ventured to interrupt him. The columns of "Hansard" contain no more diverting or more readable speech. But at the end he took a serious tone, declaring that England was responsible for the power which Turkey had abused, and that Englishmen were resolved that justice should be done. The debate was finally adjourned, and never resumed.

The real struggle came nearly three months later. The reason for Gladstone's unexpected mildness in Parliament was that the Liberal Party were not agreed, and especially that their titular leader, Lord Hartington, did not go so far as Gladstone in zeal for the Christians of the East. Meanwhile the Eastern Question was being settled by sterner methods than Parliamentary debates. On April 24, Russia declared war against Turkey, being, as she said, resolved to do single-handed what Europe would not do collectively. Gladstone gave notice that, on May 7, he would move four

resolutions, defining his Eastern policy, and a fifth combining them all in an address to the Crown. The first of these resolutions was a censure of Turkey for not fulfilling her obligations. The second declared that she was entitled to neither moral nor material support from England. The third laid down the principle that the Christian subjects of the Porte were entitled to local liberty and practical self-government. The fourth defined the concert of Europe as the proper method for carrying these proposals into effect. These resolutions were too strong for the moderate Liberals, and Sir John Lubbock, afterwards Lord Avebury, gave notice on their behalf that he would move the previous question, which it was understood that Lord Hartington would support. But before the debate came on an arrangement was made. Gladstone agreed to move only the first of his resolutions, for which the whole Liberal Party were ready, with a slight verbal amendment, to vote. In bringing forward this motion, however, which he did in one of his greatest rhetorical efforts, Gladstone contrived to argue on behalf of his whole policy. He spoke under most difficult conditions. The Ministerialists, taking advantage of the opportunity which his change of purpose afforded them, got up a preliminary wrangle in which they taunted

him with his vacillation, and succeeded in putting off the beginning of his speech to the time at which it would naturally have ended. But Gladstone rose at seven o'clock as fresh as if he had risen at five, and there was no trace, either in his arguments or in his delivery, of physical or mental exhaustion. He pointed out that though the Treaty of Paris was still valid between the other Powers, Turkey, by breaking it, had forfeited all right to its protection. It could give her, he said, no right to oppress her subjects, whereas it did give her subjects the right of appeal from her oppression. The knell of Turkish tyranny, he exclaimed, had sounded, and any attempt on the part of this country to assist Turkey in the future would not only be immoral but impolitic, and would be playing into the hands of Russia, whom his opponents most distrusted. The debate, thus begun, lasted till May 14, when Gladstone rose at midnight to reply. Less rhetorical than his opening statement, this speech was a model of compression, and summed up the arguments on his side with singular power. He contrasted the tone of Lord Derby, who had done all that words could do in bringing Turkey to her senses, with the tone of Sir Henry Elliot, who had cynically observed that British interests were not affected by the number of

Christians massacred in Bulgaria. Denying that he was or ever had been in favour of joining Russia to make war upon Turkey, he declared himself for the coercion of the Porte by united Europe, and it was the British Government, he added, which had stood in the way of European unity. His motion was, however, rejected by a majority of 131, which was very much in excess of what the Government could ordinarily anticipate.

Out of doors his popularity ran very high, and soon after Parliament rose there occurred a remarkable example of the hero-worship with which his name became afterwards associated. Early in August he received at Hawarden a deputation of Liberals from Bolton. He refused to address them on politics, or to interrupt his occupation for the afternoon, which was his favourite amusement of cutting down a tree; but he admitted them to the Park, and while he was thus occupied they gathered round him to pick up the chips which fell from his axe. In October of this year Gladstone paid one of his rare visits to Ireland, where he was presented with the freedom of Dublin, and delivered a speech on the successful working of the Irish Land Act. In Ireland he said nothing about Eastern affairs; but he dealt with them at Holyhead on his way back, and paid an eloquent tribute to the Noncon-

formist Churches of the land for the help which they had given him in his efforts for the Christians of Bulgaria. On November 15 he was chosen to be Lord Rector of Glasgow in succession to Lord Beaconsfield, his competitor being Sir Stafford Northcote.

Meanwhile the war had proceeded rapidly. At first the Turkish troops, who fought splendidly, gained some victories. But the superior numbers of the Russians, guided by the strategy of General Todleben, soon prevailed; and by the beginning of 1878 Turkey was at the feet of Russia. Parliament was summoned for January 17, an unusually early date, and the Queen's Speech announced that Turkey had asked for the mediation of the Queen's Government, which her Majesty was not indisposed to offer. The debate on the Address was tame; but great excitement was caused on January 25, when Lord Carnarvon announced his resignation in the. House of Lords. The reasons for this step were two. In the first place, Lord Beaconsfield had severely condemned Lord Carnarvon's announcement to a deputation that no Englishman would be mad enough to repeat the blunder of the Crimean War. In the second place, the Government had ordered the Mediterranean fleet to Constantinople with the ostensible object of protecting

British subjects. The fleet did not, as a matter of fact, pass the Dardanelles, having been ordered, amid some ridicule, to return. But Lord Carnarvon's retirement, in which he persisted, was regarded as ominous by the party of peace, and their apprehensions were renewed when, on January 28, it was announced that the Government would ask the House of Commons for a vote of credit to the amount of £6,000,000. It was arranged that this vote should be taken on the 31st, and on the 30th Gladstone attended at Oxford, which he had not visited since his rejection by the University, the foundation of the Palmerston Club. Speaking at the inaugural dinner, he condemned in very strong language the dispatch of the fleet to the Dardanelles, and, referring to the charge of being an agitator, admitted that circumstances had driven him into a course of agitation for the last eighteen months. He confessed that during that period he had laboured day and night to "counter-work the purposes of Lord Beaconsfield."

On the next evening the vote of credit was to have been moved in the House of Commons by Sir Stafford Northcote; but, before the Speaker left the chair, Mr. Forster moved a preliminary amendment, declaring that, as neither combatant had infringed the principles of neutrality, there was no ground for

taking steps which implied a possible extension of the war. The debate lasted till February 7, and Gladstone spoke on the 4th, denouncing "prestige," in almost the same language used by Lord Salisbury eleven years before, as a hateful sham. He made also a powerful plea for the right of Turkey's Hellenic provinces to the sympathy and protection of Europe. Alluding to the proposal of a European Conference, he protested against accompanying pacific negotiations with the clash of arms. On February 7 it was announced, on the authority of Mr. Layard, who had succeeded Sir Henry Elliot as British Ambassador at Constantinople, and who was even more Turkish in his leanings than Sir Henry, that the reported armistice between the two Powers had not been signed, and that the Russian Army was close to Constantinople. Mr. Forster thereupon asked leave to withdraw his amendment, and though, later in the evening, Sir Stafford Northcote read a telegram from Prince Gortschakoff absolutely denying Mr. Layard's assertion, it was not moved.

On March 3, the Treaty of San Stefano, between Russia and Turkey, brought the war to an end, without any occupation of Constantinople, though the British fleet had entered the Dardanelles. This treaty recognized the independence of Servia and

Bulgaria. But the British Government insisted upon its revision, under the Treaty of Paris, by a Conference of the Powers, and to this course Russia ultimately consented. The conduct of Mr. Layard, whose alarming reports had proved to be unfounded, was brought before the House of Commons on March 12 by Mr. Evelyn Ashley, who moved a vote of censure on him for having taken up a charge, made by a correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, that Gladstone had been trying to stir up rebellion among the Sultan's Greek subjects. The charge was admitted on all hands to be unfounded. But Mr. Layard was proved to have made a sort of apology, and the motion was rejected by a majority of seventy-four, Gladstone taking no part in the debate. On March 28, Lord Derby resigned office without stating his reasons, which proved afterwards to have been the decision of the Government to call out the reserves and to occupy Cyprus. He was succeeded at the Foreign Office by Lord Salisbury, who, on April 1, criticized, in a long and able dispatch, the terms which Russia sought to impose on Turkey. The expediency of calling out the reserves, which could only be done in time of national emergency, was discussed in the House of Commons on April 8, when Gladstone commented strongly upon Lord Salisbury's dispatch, which he described

as substituting England for Europe. At this time his unpopularity in London, and especially in the House of Commons, was extreme. His house in Harley Street was attacked by a mob of the people then first called Jingoes, and he himself, with Mrs. Gladstone, was hustled in the streets.

On April 12 there was an unprecedented scene at the House. In a debate upon the murder of Lord Leitrim, an Irish member, Mr. O'Donnell, made aspersions upon Lord Leitrim's moral character, in order, as he said, to show that the murder was not agrarian. An Irish Conservative moved that strangers should be excluded, and by a majority they were. Gladstone, Lowe, and Hartington were hooted in the Lobby, as they went out to vote against the exclusion, an insult of which Lord Hartington bitterly complained. On April 16 the House of Commons adjourned for a long Easter recess, after a positive assurance from Sir Stafford Northcote that the Government contemplated no immediate change of policy. On the 17th it was announced that 7,000 Indian troops had been ordered to Malta. When Parliament reassembled, the Liberal leaders, including Gladstone, argued that this step was unconstitutional, and inconsistent with the Mutiny Act, which determined the number of the standing Army. But the Govern-

ment were supported by large majorities in both Houses.

On June 13 the European Congress met at Berlin, under the presidency of Prince Bismarck—the British representatives being Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Salisbury, and Lord Odo Russell, afterwards Lord Ampthill. While the Congress was sitting the *Globe* published a copy of an agreement between England and Russia, defining, among other things, the limits within which independence should be given to part of Bulgaria. This document, though surreptitiously obtained, was strictly accurate. The treaty signed on May 30 was intended to be secret, but the understanding which it proved to exist between England and Russia strengthened the case of those who had urged that there was no ground for warlike preparations before the Congress. A further agreement between England and Turkey furnished the text for a vigorous speech which Gladstone delivered at Bermondsey on July 20. This convention provided that, in return for the cession of Cyprus, and the usual promises of reform, England should protect the remaining territories of Turkey in Asia. Gladstone called it "an insane covenant," and protested that none of the Conservative statesmen with whom he had acted in past years would have dreamed of assent-

ing to it. On July 23 he proposed, without success, in the House of Commons, that proceedings under the Vernacular Press Act, by which Lord Lytton had established a censorship of the Native Press in India, should be laid before Parliament.

On July 30 the Treaty of Berlin was brought before the House by Lord Hartington, who moved a resolution, sarcastically described by Lord Beaconsfield as "a series of congratulatory regrets." Lord Hartington asked the House to condemn the failure of the Congress to satisfy the just claims of Greece, and to censure the Government for having incurred a liability to defend the Asiatic dominions of the Sultan. To the debate thus raised Gladstone contributed an elaborate and argumentative speech, unusually devoid of rhetoric, and devoted to an exhaustive analysis of what the treaty did and failed to do. None of his Parliamentary speeches delivered in Opposition show signs of having been more carefully prepared, and it is one of the very few which he revised before it appeared in "Hansard." He began with a reference to the personal attack made upon him a few nights before by Lord Beaconsfield at a dinner in the Knightsbridge Riding School. Lord Beaconsfield had then charged Gladstone with indulgence in very gross

personalities, and in particular with having described him as a dangerous and even devilish character. Gladstone at once wrote a letter, beginning "Dear Lord Beaconsfield," in which he asked for a specification of the time and place in which he had used such language, or any other of a personal as distinguished from a political kind. Lord Beaconsfield replied in the third person that he was "much pressed with affairs," and unable to examine the speeches of two years. But he cited an instance in which some one, not Gladstone, had compared him, in Gladstone's presence, with Mephistopheles. This was all the satisfaction that Gladstone ever received. Passing from this repulsive subject, as he called it, Gladstone proceeded to deal with the Treaty, which he said had been described by its admirers as concentrating the Turkish Empire. Pointing out that more than half of the Sultan's subjects had been wholly or partially removed from his jurisdiction, he observed that this sort of concentration might be obtained in the case of a man by cutting off his limbs. Half Bulgaria was free, though, unfortunately, not the whole. Roumania and Servia were now nominally as well as practically independent. The independence of Montenegro was formally recognized. But nothing had been done for Greece except that

a possible rectification of frontier was left over for future settlement. Thus the Slavs, who relied upon Russia, had got most, if not all, of what they wanted; whereas the Greeks, who had never been Russian in sympathy, had got nothing. What a lesson, he observed, for the enemies of Russia to teach the south-east of Europe! He severely criticized the conduct of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury for having actively opposed at the Congress the claims of Greece, which had been urged especially by the representatives of France. At the close of his speech he turned from the Treaty to the Anglo-Turkish Convention, which he described as not only impolitic but a breach of public law, inasmuch as it seriously modified the Treaty of Paris without the consent of the other Powers. Finally, he attacked the Government for abusing the prerogative of the Crown to make treaties without the consent of Parliament. The Treaty of Berlin, he said, not having been ratified, was open to Parliamentary disapproval. But the Treaty of Berlin was good so far as it went, and no one desired to disavow it. The separate engagements between England and Turkey, which he and the Opposition regarded as wholly bad, had been ratified, and were therefore beyond the power of Parliament altogether. Lord Hartington's motion

was, however, after a long debate, defeated by a majority of 143.

In the autumn of this year Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India, made war upon Shere Ali, the Ameer of Afghanistan. The ground of hostilities was the refusal of the Ameer, who had received a Russian envoy, to receive an English one. The English envoy, escorted by a small army, started from Peshawur on September 21, but was stopped on the frontier by an Afghan force. On November 20, Afghanistan was invaded, and after severe fighting Cabul was occupied. On November 30, Gladstone, who had determined not to contest Greenwich again, delivered to his constituents a farewell address at Plumstead. The greater part of this speech was an indictment of Lord Lytton's policy, approved and adopted by the Cabinet. He argued that it was a breach of faith to force a British, as distinguished from a native, Resident (to whom Shere Ali had no objection) upon the Ameer. He denied that Shere Ali had given any just cause of offence, and maintained that if this country had grounds of complaint it was not against Afghanistan, but against Russia, who had undertaken not to interfere in that country. Thus the Government spared the strong State, which was to blame, and crushed the weak State, which was

not. In a peroration of singular eloquence he quoted the famous words of Lady Macbeth, "All the perfumes of Arabia cannot sweeten this little hand," and added, in reference to the physician's familiar answer, "In this the patient must minister to himself," that the disease of an evil conscience was beyond the skill of all the physicians in all the countries of the world. The outbreak of war made it necessary to call Parliament together in the winter, and both Houses met on December 5. An amendment to the Address, condemning the Afghan policy of the Government, was moved by Mr. Whitbread on the 9th, and on the 10th Gladstone spoke. He quoted freely from the Blue Books presented by the Government, to show that the Ameer had not, as was said, insulted either the British envoy or the Indian Government. In a subsequent debate he also protested against saddling the expenses of the war upon the tax-payers of India. But the Government were quite unassailable in the House of Commons, and their majorities suffered no appreciable diminution.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MIDLOTHIAN CAMPAIGN, AND ITS RESULTS.

THE session of 1879, though it witnessed the rise of Mr. Parnell as a political force, was comparatively flat and tame. A General Election was thought to be imminent, and statesmen on both sides were more anxious to address the constituencies than the House of Commons. None of Gladstone's speeches in the House this year were of great importance. On April 17 he spoke in favour of Mr. Cartwright's motion calling upon the Government to satisfy the claims of Greece, and pointed out that she had a clear right to rely upon the expectations held out to her by Lord Salisbury. On April 28, speaking to a motion proposed by Mr. Rylands against the extravagance of the Estimates, he maintained that Sir Stafford Northcote, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, had departed, by unnecessary borrowing, from the sound principles of finance, had destroyed his own Sinking Fund, and had failed in time of peace to pay for

expenditure out of revenue. On July 15 he seconded Lord Hartington's efforts to procure the abolition of flogging in the Army. But it is only fair to say that this reform, adopted by Gladstone and Hartington in 1881, was brought within the range of practical politics by the persistent efforts of some Irish members, among whom Mr. Parnell was the most conspicuous. On July 22, the unfulfilled portions of the Treaty of Berlin were again brought before the House, this time by Sir Charles Dilke. Gladstone, in supporting him, claimed for Greece the moral right to Epirus, Thessaly, and Crete. Dealing with the scare of Panslavism as a danger to the east of Europe, he prescribed Panhellenism as the best remedy for the disease.

But Gladstone's chief efforts in 1879 were made outside the walls of Parliament. At the request of Lord Rosebery and other influential Liberals, he agreed to contest the county of Midlothian against Lord Dalkeith, the eldest son of the Duke of Buccleuch. He at once entered upon a political campaign which for vigour and energy was never surpassed even by himself. He left Liverpool on November 24, and from that date till December 9, when he returned to Hawarden, there was scarcely a lawful day on which he did not deliver at least one speech; more often it was two or three. Before

he crossed the Border he had spoken at several railway stations, and on November 25 he addressed a crowded meeting in the Music Hall at Edinburgh. Here he dwelt upon the danger of enlarging our responsibilities, and proclaimed that the real strength of the Empire must always lie in the population of the United Kingdom. He again condemned the Afghan War, which by this time had led to the murder of Sir Louis Cavagnari, the British Resident at Cabul. He denounced, also, the Zulu War, made by Sir Bartle Frere, the High Commissioner for South Africa, against the instructions of the Government, who censured, but did not recall him. Criticizing the annexation of the Transvaal, which had occurred in 1877, he contended that the people of Great Britain had been misled into supposing that the Boers wished to become British subjects. Since the annexation two-thirds of the burghers had signed a petition against it, and thus proved it to be, in his view, unjustifiable. At Dalkeith, on the 26th, he spoke chiefly on home affairs, expressing his belief in the principle of local option, and in a general extension of local government, so far as was compatible with the supremacy of Parliament. Disestablishment, he said, was a question for the people of Scotland themselves; he had no wish

either to advance or to retard it. At West Calder, on the 27th, he returned to the subject of foreign politics, maintaining that the Government had at the same time aggrandized and alienated Russia. His reception in Scotland was more enthusiastic than had ever before been given to any statesman, and on one occasion he addressed as many as 20,000 people within the walls of the Waverley Market at Edinburgh. His campaign ended for the year at Glasgow, where, in an elaborate oration, he surveyed the whole foreign policy of the Government. The responsibility for that policy, he said, rested at present upon the Cabinet and the House of Commons alone; but the question must very soon be submitted to the people, who would have to deal with the Ministerial majority, not collectively, but individually. Laying particular stress upon the fundamental principle that large and small States should be treated with equal justice and forbearance, he protested strongly against the aggressive Imperialism of the Prime Minister, of which the motto was borrowed from a Roman statesman. The words *Imperium et libertas*—Empire and liberty—meant, in the mouth of a Roman, liberty for himself and empire over the rest of mankind. That pretension in the mouth of an Englishman he emphatically condemned;

and he called upon the people of the United Kingdom to dissociate themselves from a policy which had led to nothing but humiliation and disaster. At Glasgow he also delivered his address as Lord Rector of the University, and turning aside from politics, as no one could more readily do, he impressed upon the students the superiority of knowledge to wealth as an object of human endeavour.

Parliament met on February 5, 1880, and there was nothing in the Queen's Speech to show that the session would be shorter than usual. But, as a matter of fact, only one subject of any importance was raised in it. On March 5, Sir Wilfrid Lawson brought forward his annual resolution in favour of Local Option, and Gladstone took part in the debate. While declaring in favour of the principle, he refused to vote for the motion on the ground that no practical plan had been proposed, and that there was no reference to the vested interests which would be disturbed. Three days afterwards, on March 8, it was announced in both Houses that Parliament would be dissolved immediately after the Budget. Lord Beaconsfield, having no constituents, addressed to the Duke of Marlborough, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, a public letter, in which he said that a danger more serious than

pestilence or famine threatened the Irish nation, through the devices of men who were bent at all costs upon repealing the Union. Although the style of this letter was justly criticized, and its exaggerations reasonably censured, it must be admitted that Lord Beaconsfield, perhaps because he was in office, showed more knowledge of Irish politics than his rival. On the 12th appeared Gladstone's address to the electors of Midlothian, in which he cast ridicule upon the Prime Minister's gloomy prophecies, and accused him of seeking to hide the misdeeds of his Ministry by "terrifying insinuations." On the same day Gladstone spoke in Marylebone, and expressed a hope that, whatever the result of the General Election might be, it would be unmistakable. He also took the opportunity of announcing that Lord Derby had formally joined the Liberal Party.

On the 16th he left London for Edinburgh, addressing a crowd that had assembled at King's Cross, and speaking at every station where the train stopped. It was afterwards found that in each of these places there had been a Liberal victory. On the 17th he delivered one of his finest speeches in the Edinburgh Music Hall. This speech contains the clearest and fullest exposition of foreign policy in its general principles which

Gladstone ever put forward. He dealt first with the allegation that if he and his party came into power they would repudiate the engagements of their predecessors. He pointed out that this was impossible, inasmuch as an international treaty bound future Governments as much as the Government which made it. He separated himself and the Liberal Party in general from the doctrines of the Manchester School and of peace at any price. Paying a high tribute to the Manchester School for their lofty aspirations and unselfish motives, he nevertheless declared it to be a "noble error" that the world could at present be governed without the risk of war. Examining the policy of Lord Beaconsfield, particularly as embodied in the Treaty of Berlin, compared with the Treaty of San Stefano, he showed that Bessarabia had been handed over to Russian despotism, and Macedonia to the worse than despotism of the Turk. Recalling the ridicule which had been cast upon his prescription of "bag and baggage," he proved that it had been strictly carried out, not only in Bulgaria, but in Eastern Roumelia, from which the official Turks had entirely disappeared.

One allusion in this speech led to rather serious consequences. Quoting from the *Standard* the report of a conversation between the Emperor of

Austria and Sir Henry Elliot, the British Ambassador at Vienna, in which the Emperor was made to denounce him by name as an enemy of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, Gladstone denied that he was the enemy of any country. But he censured in strong language Austria's hostility to the freedom of her neighbours, and defied any one to put his finger upon any part of the map of Europe and say, "There Austria did good." On March 22, speaking at Gilmerton, in Midlothian, Gladstone dealt with Lord Salisbury's charge against him that he had disestablished the Irish Church three years after declaring the question to be outside the range of practical politics. Admitting the fact, he said that the phrase meant within the lifetime of the Parliament elected in 1865, and was therefore accurate. But he went on to employ a simile which became the subject of much not unnatural criticism. The Established Church in Ireland, he said, had long been a grievance. But the attention of the English people was forcibly called to it by the Fenian outrages in Manchester and Clerkenwell. They were not the cause of disestablishment, still less its justification. The sound of a church bell was not the reason why a man went to church, but it reminded him that it was time to go. On the 23rd, speaking at Pathhead, he recurred to the subject of

Austria, expressed a fear that she might intend to enlarge her borders at the expense of the Balkan Principalities, and invited her to disclaim all aggressive designs. On the 25th, at Penicuik, he referred to a contradiction by Sir Henry Elliot of the language attributed to the Emperor, and once more challenged the Austrian Government to disclaim any intention of going beyond the Treaty of Berlin. At Stow, on the 30th, he discussed the financial arrangements of the Government, and, with special reference to the Afghan War, observed: "We do not know the worst." This remark was destined to receive a singular and startling verification; for on May 6 the public learnt, by a telegram from India, that Sir John Strachey, the Finance Minister, had made an extraordinary blunder, and that the war would cost, not £6,000,000 but £15,000,000.

At this election, Gladstone made fifteen set speeches, without counting occasional addresses. Lord Hartington, however, made twenty-four. The polling began on March 31, and, after the first day, the final result was never for a moment doubtful. The Liberals swept the country: 349 of them were returned, as against 243 Conservatives and 60 Home Rulers. Gladstone himself was successful in Midlothian, polling 1,579 votes against 1,368 given for Lord Dalkeith. He was at the same time placed

at the head of the poll for Leeds, where, after he had elected to sit for Midlothian, he was succeeded by his youngest son. At this time the Queen was abroad, and there was consequently some delay in the change of Government. Lord Beaconsfield, however, took the earliest opportunity of resigning, and on April 22 her Majesty sent for Lord Hartington. This was in strict accordance with constitutional usage, as Gladstone had retired from the Liberal leadership five years before. Lord Hartington did not at once decline to form a Government, but, after an interview with Gladstone on the 22nd, when he returned from Windsor, he abandoned the idea. On the 23rd he and Lord Granville saw the Queen together, with the result that her Majesty sent for Gladstone the same afternoon. He at once formed, without the slightest difficulty, a strong Administration, becoming himself, as he had been in 1873, First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Granville and Lord Hartington, whose conduct was irreproachable, both took office under him—the former as Foreign Secretary, and the latter as Secretary for India. In other respects the Government much resembled that of 1868. Lord Selborne returned to the woolsack, and Mr. Bright, to whom official work was never congenial, became Chancellor of the Duchy. Lord

Cardwell's health had failed, and Mr. Lowe was extinguished under a coronet with the title of Lord Sherbrooke. Sir William Harcourt, who had been for a short time Solicitor-General, became Home Secretary; while Mr. Chamberlain, whose political association, commonly called the Birmingham Caucus, had been of great practical value to the Liberal Party, entered a Government and a Cabinet for the first time as President of the Board of Trade. Of the other Radicals, Mr. Fawcett was made Postmaster-General, without a seat in the Cabinet, for which his blindness was held to disqualify him, and Sir Charles Dilke Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Mr. Goschen refused to join the Government because he was not prepared to vote for the extension of the county franchise, and he was sent as Special Ambassador to Constantinople. A good deal of feeling was excited among fanatical Protestants by the appointment of one Catholic, Lord Ripon, to be Viceroy of India, and another, Lord Kenmare, to be Lord Chamberlain.

On May 7 the *Daily News* announced that Lord Granville had sent a circular to the Powers, urging a joint enforcement of the unfulfilled clauses in the Treaty of Berlin, such as those which dealt with Montenegro, Greece, and Armenia. The object of Mr. Goschen's mission was to impress upon the

Sultan the duty of fulfilling these engagements. On May 10 there appeared a letter from Gladstone to Count Karolyi, the Austrian Ambassador, which was the subject of much excited comment. Referring to letters and conversation with the Ambassador, which, unfortunately, were never published, Gladstone intimated that he had obtained from Austria those assurances of fidelity to the Treaty of Berlin which he had called upon her to give. In these circumstances, he said, it was not his intention to repeat or defend in argument language which he had used in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility. The phrase was felicitous, and has become part of the political vocabulary. But the Opposition bitterly denounced the letter as unworthy of a British Minister, ignoring the fact that Gladstone's challenge had been answered, and that he had received precisely what he asked for. Thus, while Lord George Hamilton called the letter shameful and shameless, Lord Salisbury pointed out that Gladstone had withdrawn nothing, and expressed surprise that the Austrian Government should be so easily satisfied.

On May 20 the Queen's Speech was delivered. It contained a hope for the pacification of Afghanistan, an assertion of supremacy over the Transvaal, and an opinion that the ordinary law would be sufficient

in Ireland. This meant that the Peace Preservation Act, which expired on June 1, was not to be renewed. On the 21st, Gladstone, who had been re-elected without opposition after taking office, had his first experience of the perplexing case raised by Mr. Bradlaugh, one of the members for Northampton, who had refused to take the oath of allegiance, on the ground that it had no specially binding effect on his conscience. This was before Gladstone came back to the House, and Lord Frederick Cavendish, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Government, had moved that the case should be referred to a Select Committee. The Committee reported, by a majority of one, that Mr. Bradlaugh, not being a Quaker, had no right to make an affirmation in lieu of an oath, as he had claimed to do. Bradlaugh now came forward to take the oath, casting the responsibility upon those who would not let him affirm. Sir Henry Wolff objected, and Gladstone proposed the appointment of another Committee, to consider whether the House had a right of interference with the discretion of a duly-elected member. He pointed out that the duty of taking the oath was imposed by statute, and that the proper interpreters of statutes were the Courts of Law. After a long debate, Sir Henry Wolff's motion that Bradlaugh,

having no religious belief, could not take an oath, was defeated by 289 votes to 214, and the Committee was appointed. They reported that Bradlaugh was incapable of taking an oath, but recommended that he should be allowed to affirm at his own risk. On June 21 a motion to that effect was made by Mr. Labouchere, the other member for Northampton, and supported by Gladstone; but, after two nights' debate, it was defeated by a majority of 45. On the 23rd, Bradlaugh again appeared to take the oath; but in accordance with the resolution of the House, the Speaker refused to have it administered to him. He was, however, allowed to be heard on his own behalf at the Bar. He was then ordered to withdraw, which he declined to do, and was taken into custody by the Serjeant-at-Arms. Gladstone declined to interfere. The House, he said, had rejected his advice, and the duty of proceeding further in the matter devolved upon the leader of the Opposition. On June 24, Sir Stafford Northcote, to the general surprise, moved that Bradlaugh should be released, and released he was. On July 1 the question was settled for the year by Gladstone's motion, which the House adopted, that any person claiming to affirm should be allowed to do so. Bradlaugh accordingly affirmed, and took his seat.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LAND LEAGUE.

ON June 10, Gladstone, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, introduced a Supplementary Budget, Sir Stafford Northcote's Budget having only provided for the early part of the year. It was the first time he had made the financial statement of the Government for fourteen years. The principal feature of it was the unexpected repeal of the Malt Tax, for which Conservative representatives of the farming interests had clamoured for many years, but which no Conservative Government had found itself able to touch. Gladstone substituted for it a duty on beer, and provided for the incidental loss to the revenue by putting another penny on the Income Tax, all hope of abolishing that tax having long since vanished. The Budget met with little opposition, and was generally popular. The principal struggle of the session, after the case of Mr. Bradlaugh had been temporarily disposed of, arose out of the Irish Compensation Bill, which Mr. For-

ster, the Chief Secretary, was compelled to introduce by the prevalence of severe distress in Ireland, and by the conduct of those landlords who took advantage of it to evict their tenants. The Bill, which was originally a single clause in a general measure for the relief of Irish distress, gave compensation for disturbance to tenants evicted for not paying their rent, and, therefore, not within the Land Act of 1870. It was confined to cases arising out of the recent failure of the crops; and Gladstone defended it as an exceptional measure required to maintain the principle of property. The second reading was carried by 295 votes against 217. But the Bill did not satisfy the Home Rulers, who refused to vote for going into Committee on it, and also abstained on the third reading. The Bill was read a second time on June 25, and a third time on July 26. But the labours of the House of Commons upon it were thrown away; Lord Beaconsfield strongly opposed it, and on August 3 the House of Lords rejected it by 282 votes to 51. Mr. Forster strongly protested against this decision, and laid upon the House of Lords the responsibility for the condition of Ireland. The session was unusually prolonged, owing to Tory obstruction and to the resolve of the Government that Parliament should not be prorogued until all the principal Bills in the Queen's Speech had been

passed. These were the Ground Game Bill, which enabled tenants, in spite of leases, to kill hares and rabbits on their own farms; the Employers' Liability Bill, which modified the doctrine of common employment by giving workmen compensation for the negligence of foremen as well as masters; and the Burials Bill, which settled a very old controversy by permitting Dissenters to bury their dead with their own services in the parish churchyard. All these Bills became law before the prorogation, which occurred on September 7. In August, Sir Wilfrid Lawson carried for the first time his proposal for Local Option, although Gladstone again declined to support an abstract resolution which he was not prepared to embody in a Bill. On August 2 it was announced in the newspapers that the Prime Minister, almost for the first time in his life, was seriously ill. He was suffering from fever, accompanied by congestion of the lungs. For some days his condition was the cause of much anxiety, and his opponents, from Lord Beaconsfield downwards, showed a sympathetic interest in his health. He soon recovered, however, and on August 28 appeared again in the House of Commons, which had in his absence been temporarily led by Lord Hartington.

During the autumn further efforts were made to carry out the Treaty of Berlin. On September 14

a naval demonstration, organized by all the Great Powers, was made off the coast of Albania. The Opposition, especially Lord Salisbury, scoffed at this empty show of force. But it had its effect upon Turkey, and on November 26 Dulcigno was formally ceded by the Porte to Prince Nicholas of Montenegro. Meanwhile the state of Ireland was going from bad to worse. Distress continued, and so did evictions, which, however, the excitement of public opinion made it extremely difficult to carry out. The Land League, which had been founded in 1879, daily increased in influence, under the lead of Mr. Parnell, and the system known as "Boycotting" was now for the first time completely organized. The Government endeavoured to meet the prevailing discontent in two ways. They appointed an Irish Land Commission, of which Lord Bessborough was Chairman, to inquire into the best means of amending the Irish Land Act, and they also took active steps against the promoters of resistance to the law. On November 2 criminal informations were filed against Parnell and thirteen other leaders of the popular party. Their trial was fixed for December 28. Meanwhile they took no notice of the prosecution, and continued to act as before. An Irish landlord, Lord Mountmorres, was brutally murdered, for reasons which were never

fully explained, and no one was made amenable for the crime. There was a clamour in England for measures of repression, many meetings of the Cabinet were held, and it was decided that Parliament should be called together on January 6, 1881. On November 9, Gladstone, speaking at the Lord Mayor's dinner, declared, in very emphatic language, that the law would be enforced in Ireland at all costs, and by whatever means might be required for the purpose.

The session of 1881 was almost exclusively Irish. It was unusually long, lasting from January 7 to August 27. The Queen's Speech announced that her Majesty's forces would be withdrawn as soon as possible from Afghanistan, and that Candahar, which had been occupied by Lord Lytton, would not be permanently retained. It also promised a Bill for the protection of property in Ireland, another for the protection of life, and a third for the reform of the Land Laws. Gladstone gave notice that as soon as the debate on the Address was finished he should ask for the precedence of the Irish Coercion Bills, to give them their popular name. Irish obstruction at once began. The debate on the Address was prolonged for eleven nights, and was almost wholly devoted to Ireland. Mr. Parnell moved an amendment against coercion,

and Mr. M'Carthy proposed that evictions should not be enforced by the Government until the Land Bill had been passed. When these motions had been disposed of, Mr. Forster introduced his Peace Preservation Bill, of which the principal feature was the absolute power of the Lord-Lieutenant to arrest any one officially suspected of treasonable practices, and detain him without trial, till September 30, 1882, when the Act would expire. This was a strange Bill for a Liberal Government to bring in. But the state of Ireland was so serious that Ministers were supported by the vast majority of the House. Opposition came only from the Irish Home Rulers, and from a few independent Radicals, such as Mr. Cowen, Mr. Labouchere, and Mr. Charles Russell, afterwards Lord Chief Justice of England. Gladstone declared that the Bill was directed against intolerable tyranny, and that it was required to maintain "the first conditions of Christian and civilized existence." While these debates were in progress, the trial of Mr. Parnell, Mr. Dillon, and the other State prisoners, came to an end at Dublin. The jury were unable to agree, and the Government did not put the defendants on their trial again. The Irish members endeavoured by physical endurance to prevent the Coercion Bill from being brought in. The knot seemed inextricable; it was

cut. The House of Commons sat continuously for forty-one hours—from four o'clock on Monday, January 31, to nine o'clock on the following Wednesday morning. Mr. Speaker Brand then came into the House, and, having taken the chair which the Deputy-Speaker vacated, declined to call on Mr. Biggar, who had risen to continue the debate, put the question, and threw himself upon the support of the House. He explained that a grave crisis had arisen for which ordinary rules did not provide, and with which he was compelled therefore personally to deal.

The first reading of the Bill was carried by 164 to 19, and Gladstone at once gave notice of a motion for accelerating its further progress. This was that, on the proposal of the Speaker, supported by forty members rising in their places, public business might be declared urgent by a division without debate, and that thereupon the control of procedure should pass into the hands of the Speaker for so long as he thought necessary. This resolution was to be moved on February 3. But the Irish members were determined to prevent it from coming on. They had been exasperated by Sir William Harcourt's announcement that Michael Davitt's ticket of leave had been withdrawn; and when Gladstone rose, Mr. Dillon, following an un-

fortunate precedent set by Gladstone himself on July 14, 1880, moved that he should not be heard. He was at once suspended, and removed by the Serjeant-at-Arms. But the obstruction was continued by the thirty-five other Home Rulers who were present, until, by half-past eight, they had all been turned out of the House. Then at last Gladstone was able to propose his resolution, with amendments, which he accepted from Sir Stafford Northcote, to the effect that a motion for urgency must be made by a Minister, that it might be brought to an end by another motion, and that at least 200 members must vote for it. In a speech, which Sir Stafford described as having enthralled and entranced the House, Gladstone said that his personal interest in the question was small. His lease was almost run out, but he implored the House of Commons not to allow itself to be made the laughing-stock of the world. At the suggestion of Sir Stafford Northcote, the resolution was still further modified so as to include only a particular Bill, and it was added that urgency must be voted by a majority of three to one in a House of 300 members. The resolution, thus altered, was carried by 234 to 156. On February 4 the Speaker, acting upon it, laid certain rules upon the table, the chief of which enabled him to put the question whenever

he thought fit. The Irish members, however, continued the struggle, and on February 18 the Speaker produced further rules, one of which contained the time limit, afterwards known as the gag. Taking advantage of this, Gladstone, on February 21, moved, and carried by an overwhelming majority, that the proceedings in Committee on the Bill should be brought to a close on the next day. But of the sixty-three members who voted against this resolution thirteen were Conservatives. The report of the Bill was hastened in the same way, and on February 24 it was read a third time, and passed the House of Lords in three days. Urgency was then applied to the Arms Bill, which prohibited for five years the carrying of weapons in proclaimed districts of Ireland, and gave the police the right of search for them. This Bill, which was in the hands of Sir William Harcourt, had to be forced through the House by the same drastic methods as its predecessor.

Twice in this session Gladstone had occasion to deliver one of those obituary speeches in which he excelled all his contemporaries. On March 13, Alexander II., Emperor of Russia, was murdered in St. Petersburg, and on the 15th a vote of condolence with the Imperial family was moved by Gladstone in the House of Commons. He paid an eloquent

tribute to the memory of the Sovereign who liberated the serfs, and quoted Homer, perhaps for the only time in his life—not in the original, but in Pope. Lord Beaconsfield's death, which had been for some time expected, occurred on April 19, and on May 9, Gladstone proposed that a national memorial should be erected to him in Westminster Abbey. His speech was a masterpiece of tact and taste. Without saying anything he did not believe, he praised, in just and adequate terms, Lord Beaconsfield's singular tenacity of purpose and great Parliamentary courage. On April 5, Gladstone made his financial statement. But the days of his great Budgets were over, and his proposals were tame. He had a surplus of rather more than a million. By means of this, and by substituting a probate duty of one and a half for a legacy duty of one per cent., he was enabled to take off the penny from the Income Tax which he had put on the year before. He also proposed a reduction of debt to the amount of sixty millions by turning short into long annuities. On April 7 the claims of Greece, for which Gladstone had pleaded so earnestly in Opposition, were settled by the transfer to the Greek kingdom of Thessaly and part of Epirus. Janina and Metzovo, however, remained Turkish.

On April 22, Gladstone was able to announce

in the House of Commons the terms which had been made with the Government of the Transvaal. So early as December 16, 1880, the Boers had taken the most practical means of showing that they were not in favour of annexation by rising in armed rebellion and proclaiming the South African Republic. On January 21, during the debate on the Address, Mr. Rylands proposed an amendment condemning the annexation of the country. Gladstone objected to it as inopportune, and, as a matter of fact, negotiations were at that time proceeding through President Brand of the Orange Free State. While they were in progress, on January 26, Sir George Colley made an unfortunate attack upon the Boers at Laing's Nek, which was repulsed with heavy loss. On February 27 he was himself attacked at Majuba; his little force was routed, and he himself was killed. Sir Evelyn Wood, who succeeded to the command, assured the Government that he was in sufficient strength to crush the rebellion. But the Government refused to interrupt the negotiations on account of these defeats. On March 6 an armistice was concluded, and the war was never resumed.

The conditions of peace, as explained by the Prime Minister, were that the suzerainty of the Queen over the Transvaal should be maintained,

and that the burghers should enjoy complete self-government; but that their foreign relations should be under British control, and that there should be a British Resident at the capital. A Royal Commission was to determine the rights and provide for the protection of the natives. This settlement was bitterly attacked, both inside and outside Parliament, as a cowardly surrender. Gladstone, however, defended it on the ground that to break off negotiations already begun on account of defeat would have been a useless and therefore wicked sacrifice of life. It was not till July 25 that the question was fully discussed in the House of Commons. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach then moved a vote of censure on the Government, and Gladstone formally justified the policy of the Cabinet. He laid stress upon the fact that the first overtures to peace had come from Mr. Kruger through President Brand, and he declared, on the authority of the High Commissioner, Sir Hercules Robinson, afterwards Lord Rosmead, that the whole Dutch population of the Cape were in sympathy with the desire of the Transvaal for independence. He explained the measures that had been taken on behalf of the native population, and maintained that they were adequate. Sir Michael's motion was rejected by 315 votes against 204.

On April 7, Gladstone introduced his second Irish Land Bill, which is, perhaps, the greatest of all his legislative achievements. It did not so much amend the Act of 1870 as provide a different system and a new code more in harmony with the facts and customs of Irish life. Dealing with the reports of the Duke of Richmond's Commission, appointed by the late Government, and of Lord Bessborough's, appointed by his own, he showed that the Commissioners, though they differed in many important respects, were, with one exception, in favour of a Land Court. Such a Court he proposed to institute for the fixing of judicial rents. Either landlord or tenant could apply to the Court; the rent, when fixed, was to last for fifteen years; it was perpetually renewable, and no tenant, paying a judicial rent, was to be evicted so long as he paid it. Every tenant was to have the right of selling his farm, and no contract was to be valid against the Act in the case of any holding valued at less than £100 of rental. There were to be three Land Commissioners, of whom one would have the rank of a judge, and there were to be Assistant Commissioners for every county. If a tenant wished to purchase his holding, the Commissioners were to advance three-fourths of the purchase-money by way of loan, and there was to

be an absolute Parliamentary title. Provision was also made for the sale of a whole estate, when three-fourths of the tenants holding three-fourths of the value desired to purchase. Gladstone was accused of having in this speech banished political economy to Saturn. The foundation for this singular charge was, that in alluding to the report of Professor Bonamy Price, who was against all interference with supply and demand, Gladstone remarked that the Professor proposed to legislate for Ireland as if he were legislating for Saturn or for Jupiter. Any political economist, even Ricardo, would admit that a statesman, in framing a law, must consider the circumstances of the country to which it would apply. This Bill led to the resignation of the Duke of Argyll, who considered that his colleagues had departed from sound economic principles. The Duke's office, the Privy Seal, was a sinecure; but he was the most eloquent spokesman of the Cabinet in the House of Lords. He was succeeded by Lord Carlingford, a less brilliant but a more useful Minister. The second reading of the Bill was moved in the House of Commons on April 26, and the debate continued till May 18, when it was carried by 352 to 176. Mr. Parnell and thirty-five of his followers abstained from voting, on the ground that the Bill was inadequate,

and they did much to delay the progress of the measure in Committee. On July 14, Gladstone strongly denounced their obstructive tactics; but on the 30th the Bill was at last read a third time. The final opposition to it came from Lord Randolph Churchill, now the recognized leader of what was called the Fourth Party. Sir Stafford Northcote, with most of his followers, dissociated themselves from Lord Randolph, who had only fifteen supporters in the Lobby. In the House of Lords the Bill was read a second time on August 2 without a division. But very serious alterations were made in Committee, most of which the House of Commons refused to accept. The Lords adhered to them, and for some days it seemed probable that the conflict between the two Houses would result in the loss of the Bill. Ultimately, however, the Lords gave way on almost all points excepting the clause, originally proposed by Mr. Parnell, for giving the benefit of the Act to tenants already evicted. On August 16, Gladstone abandoned this clause on the ground that Mr. Parnell himself attached little importance to it. The Lords dropped most of their other amendments, and the Bill became law.

A good deal of time was wasted this session in futile wrangling over the case of Mr. Bradlaugh,

who had been unseated by the judgment of the Courts and subsequently re-elected for Northampton. On April 26 he again claimed to take the oath, but Sir Stafford Northcote moved that he was incapable of taking it, and should not be allowed to do so. Gladstone supported, in a purely legal speech, an amendment moved by Mr. Horace Davey, afterwards Lord Davey, to the effect that the House had no right to interfere with the conscience of a duly-elected member. But the original motion was carried by 208 to 175, and Bradlaugh, refusing to withdraw from the table, was removed from it by force. Gladstone declined to interfere, on the ground that the House would not take his advice, and that the responsibility for further steps rested with those whose advice it had taken. The next day Mr. Bradlaugh again appeared, and this time Gladstone so far met the demand of the Opposition, that the Government should take some step, as to promise that he would introduce a Bill if morning sittings could, by arrangement, be set apart for it. This proposal, however, was strenuously resisted by the Conservatives, and finally failed. On May 10, Mr. Bradlaugh, tired of waiting, again presented himself; and this time was, on Sir Stafford's motion, excluded from the precincts of the House. In accordance with this resolution,

he was, on August 3, taken from the Lobby by the police and dragged downstairs into Palace Yard. For this proceeding the Speaker assumed responsibility, and Gladstone agreed that he had no other course open to him than to carry out, by any means available, the instructions of the House.

During this autumn the state of Ireland, with the working of the Peace Preservation Act and the Land Act, absorbed public attention. Although more than 1,000 persons were at one time imprisoned without a trial by the warrant of the Lord-Lieutenant, the peace of the country continued to be seriously disturbed. Speaking at Leeds on October 7, Gladstone compared Parnell very unfavourably with O'Connell, who, he said, had always acted for the good of the Irish people as a whole. Parnell, on the contrary, endeavoured to prevent a friendly settlement between landlord and tenant. He stood, like Moses, between the living and the dead, but, unlike Moses, his object was to spread the plague. While denouncing Parnell's conduct in stringent terms, Gladstone also complained that the loyal classes in Ireland were apathetic, and did not give the Government the support which it had a right to expect. Five days afterwards, when receiving at the Guildhall the freedom of the city, Gladstone excited enthusiastic cheering from an

audience which must have been chiefly composed of Conservatives by announcing that a warrant had been issued for the arrest of Mr. Parnell on suspicion of treasonable practices. This warrant was executed on the 15th; two other members of Parliament, Mr. Sexton and Mr. O'Kelly, being also apprehended. The reply to this step was the issue from Kilmainham Jail, by the captives, of the No-Rent Manifesto, urging the Irish tenants not to pay their landlords anything until their champions were released and their arrears were wiped out. The same day the Land League was suppressed by the proclamation of the Lord-Lieutenant as an illegal body, which it had been declared from the judicial bench to be. It was feared that the winter in Ireland would be, in the political sense, very stormy, and the number of troops there was raised to 25,000. On October 26, Gladstone, accompanied by Lord Derby, addressed a Liberal meeting at Liverpool, and charged the leaders of the Land League with marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire.

Parliament met on February 7, 1882. Nearly a month before, on January 12, at the annual dinner to the tenants on the Hawarden estate, Gladstone announced that the first duty of Parliament was now to improve its own procedure in the interests

of public business. But he reckoned without Ireland, which again consumed the greater part of the ordinary session. The first question to arise, however, was the apparently interminable case of Mr. Bradlaugh, who, on February 7, again presented himself to take the oath. Sir Stafford Northcote again moved the resolution of April 26, to prevent him from doing so; and though Gladstone supported the previous question, on the old ground that the matter was one for the Courts, Sir Stafford's motion was carried against the Government by 286 to 228. On February 21 Mr. Bradlaugh varied the monotony of these proceedings by suddenly advancing to the table and administering the oath to himself. An angry debate followed, which was adjourned to the next day. Gladstone then stated the decision of the Cabinet, which was that the Conservative Party had taken the case out of the Government's hands, and must therefore be left to deal with it themselves. Sir Stafford Northcote thereupon moved and carried that Bradlaugh should be expelled the House. But he was re-elected for Northampton by an increased majority. Before he could appear in the House, however, Sir Stafford Northcote once more moved that he should not be permitted to take the oath, and, though Gladstone opposed the motion, it was carried by fifteen votes.

The Irish Question was at once raised on the Address by Mr. Smyth's amendment in favour of Home Rule. Gladstone, in a remarkable speech, which surprised many of his supporters and many of his opponents, directed his arguments, not against the principle of Home Rule, but against its practicability under present conditions. No plan, he said, had been produced which would be workable under the British Constitution and which would provide for the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. Mr. Plunket, afterwards Lord Rathmore, replying on behalf of the Opposition, described this speech as at least a partial surrender to the Home Rulers, and said that Gladstone could no longer in consistency oppose the Irish demand for a Parliamentary inquiry. This was on February 9, and a week later Gladstone, in response to numerous challenges, protested that his views were unchanged, inasmuch as the question had always been for him how the supremacy of Parliament could be preserved.

On February 20, Gladstone proposed his resolutions for reforming the procedure of the House, of which the most important were the adoption of the closure and the appointment of Standing Committees as substitutes in certain cases for Committees of the whole House. The debate had

not proceeded far when it was interrupted by other matters, and it was not till March 30 that even the principle of the closure, as distinguished from the resolution that embodied it, was carried by 318 to 279; the further consideration of the subject had to be postponed till the autumn.

Early in the session Lord Donoughmore carried, in the House of Lords against the Government, the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the working of the Land Act. The Cabinet refused to recognize the Committee, and no Ministerialist sat upon it. Gladstone took so strong a view of the conduct of the Lords in seeking to interfere, as he put it, with the proceedings of a statutory tribunal, that on February 27 he moved in the House of Commons a protest against the appointment of the Committee, which was really a vote of censure on the majority of the other House. He called upon the House of Commons to declare that such a proceeding was unconstitutional, and dangerous to the peace of Ireland. After a long debate, his motion was carried on March 9 by 303 to 235. Meanwhile the Committee had been appointed, and it continued to sit and take evidence. But it prudently abstained from asking the Commissioners to explain their judicial decision, and nothing practical came of it.

In Ireland the question of arrears became more urgent, and on March 26, in a debate on Mr. Redmond's Bill for amending the Land Act, Gladstone stated that while he could not consent, after so short an interval, to any general alteration of the law, the Government were not indisposed to deal with the specific questions of arrears which had been omitted from the Act by the vote of the Lords. A grave crisis occurred soon afterwards in Irish politics. On April 28, Lord Cowper, the Lord-Lieutenant, resigned; the ostensible ground of his resignation was weak health. He was succeeded by Lord Spencer, who, unlike his predecessor, had a seat in the Cabinet.

While the public was still speculating on the true reasons of this change, Gladstone announced, on May 3, that Mr. Parnell and his colleagues had been released from custody; that an inquiry would be made into the cases of all persons detained on suspicion; and that, as a substitute for Mr. Forster's Act, another Bill would be introduced to strengthen the ordinary law. Mr. Forster resigned, and Lord Frederick Cavendish, Gladstone's intimate friend and nephew by marriage, was appointed to succeed him. On May 5, Mr. Forster explained the grounds of his resignation. He had been unable, he said, to concur in the opinion that the release of the

suspected persons was justified, either by any satisfactory assurances from them or by the condition of Ireland. Gladstone, in reply, referred to his own speech on Mr. Redmond's Bill, and intimated that, in the opinion of the Government, the peace of Ireland would be greatly furthered by an Arrears Bill, in which they might hope for the support of the Irish Home Rulers. If a reconciliation could be effected, it would be unreasonable to detain in prison men who might help in carrying it out.

These sanguine expectations were doomed to a terrible disappointment. On May 6, Lord Frederick Cavendish was sworn in at Dublin Castle as Chief Secretary for Ireland. At seven o'clock on the same evening he and Mr. Burke, the Under-Secretary, were murdered in the Phœnix Park. Mr. Forster made a chivalrous offer to return to Ireland and carry on the business of the Castle, but this was not accepted, and Mr. Trevelyan became Chief Secretary. On May 8 the House of Commons at once adjourned after a few brief speeches, in which the representatives of all parties expressed their horror of the crime. Gladstone, speaking with evident difficulty, and with an emotion which he hardly ever showed in public, deplored the loss of a man devoted to the best interests of Ireland. Mr. Parnell also spoke with evident feeling, and it

afterwards became known that he had shown his sincerity by offering, in a private letter to the Prime Minister, that he would retire from public life if the Government thought it in the public interest that he should do so.

On May 11 the funeral of Lord Frederick Cavendish, near Chatsworth, was attended by a large proportion of the House of Commons, headed by the Prime Minister; and the same evening Sir William Harcourt introduced a Bill for the Prevention of Crime in Ireland. Although it did not authorize the detention of untried persons on suspicion, it was extremely, perhaps excessively, stringent. It provided that, for three years, treason, murder, and agrarian offences might be tried by a commission of judges without a jury. Against this provision the Irish judges protested, and one of them, Baron Fitzgerald, resigned; but, though passed, it was never put in force. The Bill also gave the police the power to search dwelling-houses for arms by day or by night, and conferred upon the Executive the right to expel aliens at their discretion. Newspapers could also be suppressed by the Irish Government; meetings which the Lord-Lieutenant regarded as unlawful could be dispersed; witnesses could be compelled, under pain of imprisonment, to attend inquiries into

crimes, although no one had been arrested as a criminal. This last provision, and the clauses which enlarged the power of selecting jurymen by changing the venue, and otherwise, proved to be by far the most useful in the Bill.

As a set-off against this severe measure, which the Home Rulers almost unanimously condemned, Gladstone, on May 15, introduced his Arrears Bill. The object of this Bill, confined to tenancies below the annual value of £30, was to wipe out arrears of rent in Ireland altogether where the tenants were unable to pay them. It was a condition that the tenant must have paid his rent from November 1880 to November 1881. If he had done that, and could, in the opinion of the Land Court or the County Court, pay no more, he was to receive, as a free gift from the State, half the amount of the arrears which might have accrued before November 1880, and the remainder was to be cancelled. The sum required for this purpose was estimated at £2,000,000, of which Gladstone calculated that three-fourths could be obtained from the surplus of the Irish Church, while the rest would have to come from the Consolidated Fund.

But before this Bill or the Crimes Bill could be seriously discussed, the Opposition raised a debate upon what they called the Treaty of Kilmainham.

It had transpired that, before Parnell's release, correspondence passed between him, the Prime Minister, and Mr. Chamberlain, through Captain O'Shea, an Irish Whig. Writing to Captain O'Shea, Parnell gave the assurance that, if the question of arrears were settled, he would be able to co-operate with the Government in the restoration of order. When this letter was first read by Captain O'Shea to the House of Commons, he unfortunately omitted a paragraph in which Parnell offered to act with the Liberal Party in the promotion of Liberal principles. The suppressed paragraph was brought out by Mr. Forster, who added that he would have concurred in the release of the prisoners if Parnell had promised for the future to act within the law. Mr. Forster produced a great impression by asserting that, in a private conversation, Captain O'Shea, on Parnell's behalf, undertook that the conspiracy, which had been used to promote outrages, should, if his terms were accepted, be employed to put them down. Mr. Balfour brought the whole subject before Parliament by moving the adjournment of the House, and declared that the Government had incurred indelible infamy. Gladstone, speaking for the whole Cabinet, except, of course, Mr. Forster, gave a positive assurance that the prisoners had been released because, in the opinion of her

Majesty's Ministers, there was no sufficient ground for detaining them further. He protested emphatically that there had been no bargain whatever, and that as soon as he heard of Mr. Parnell's offer to act with the Liberal Party, he told Mr. Forster that it was one he had no right either to expect or to accept. This did not satisfy the Conservatives, and an angry debate followed. But no division was taken, and the discussion was never renewed.

The House then proceeded with the Crimes Bill, and sat, for the first time in thirty-six years, on Derby Day. Mr. Dillon took this opportunity to make an elaborate defence of boycotting, in what Gladstone called "a heartbreaking speech." Gladstone himself, who afterwards came to see a good deal more in Mr. Dillon's arguments than he then admitted, described boycotting as combined intimidation by means of starvation and ruin. The sanction of it, he said, was "the murder which was not to be denounced." After the drastic application of "urgency" rules, and the suspension of Irish members in a batch, on the ground that, according to Mr. Playfair, the Chairman of Committees, they had been guilty of combined obstruction, though some of them were absent, and some were actually in bed, the Crimes Bill was forced through Committee early in July. On the 7th of

that month, at the stage of report, the Government suffered an unexpected defeat. Gladstone had given a promise to Mr. Parnell in Committee that he would not insist upon the clause which authorized the police to search dwelling-houses for arms at night. He accordingly proposed to omit it in the House, both on account of his pledge, and also because the power was not required by Lord Spencer, who considered it more irritating than useful. Several Liberals, including Mr. George Russell and Mr. Lambton, joined the Conservatives in protesting against this concession, and Gladstone intimated that if the Government were defeated he might have to reconsider his personal position. But, in spite of this veiled threat, the Government were put in a minority of thirteen, the Parnellites, for whom the concession was made, refusing to vote. Gladstone said that in ordinary circumstances the Government would, after such a vote, have dropped the Bill, but that the state of Ireland made such a course impossible. This was on a Friday; on Monday the Prime Minister announced that the Government considered it the more manly course to remain at a post which no one was likely to envy them.

The Arrears Bill passed without much difficulty through the House of Commons, and the Opposition

did not divide against the second reading in the Lords. But, in Committee, Lord Salisbury, who had succeeded Lord Beaconsfield as leader of the Conservative Peers, carried an amendment which made the Bill voluntary, thus enabling every landlord to prevent its operation on his estate, and, in the opinion of the Government, making it absolutely worthless. The House of Commons disagreed with Lord Salisbury's amendment, and when the Bill went back to the Lords there was every prospect of a constitutional crisis, which might have led to a change of Government. But Lord Salisbury was deserted by his followers. In withdrawing his amendment, on August 10, he spoke strongly against the Bill, which he denounced as robbery, and against the Minister who had introduced it. For himself, he said, he was quite willing to take his responsibility for the consequences of rejecting it; but others thought differently, and he was, therefore, reluctantly compelled to give way. Some smaller amendments of the Lords were agreed to by the Commons, and the Bill became law.

CHAPTER XVII.

EGYPT.

THE affairs of Egypt came before Parliament several times during the session, and Gladstone's Egyptian policy was severely criticized by some of his Radical followers. But at that time Gladstone's power and influence were such that he could do almost anything he liked. During the summer the dual control of England and France practically broke down, though it was not formally abolished till the following January. The authority of the Khedive Tewfik Pasha was threatened by a military movement under an adventurous soldier called Arabi. On June 11 there were fatal riots in Alexandria, and the British Consul, Mr. Cookson, was wounded. A month later, after repeated warnings against the arming of the forts, which was considered a menace to the foreign and especially the British ships, Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour, afterwards Lord Alcester, bombarded the forts and destroyed them. This action on the part

of the British Government, in which the French Chamber would not allow the French Government to assist, led to the retirement of Mr. Bright, who declared it to be a violation of the moral law. Gladstone, on the other hand, maintained that the rule of Arabi was a military tyranny, from which it was the duty of the British Government, on account of their position in Egypt, to relieve the Egyptian people. Mr. Bright's place was filled by Mr. Dodson, afterwards Lord Monk-Bretton, and Sir Charles Dilke entered the Cabinet for the first time as President of the Local Government Board. On July 25 the reserves were called out, and an expedition was sent, under Sir Garnet Wolseley, afterwards Lord Wolseley, to restore order and the authority of the Khedive. The rebellion ot Arabi Pasha was crushed at Tel-el-Kebir, and Arabi himself was banished to Ceylon.

On July 24, Gladstone, making his last appearance as Chancellor of the Exchequer, moved a vote of credit, on account of the Egyptian Expedition, for £2,300,000. In his ordinary Budget, introduced on April 24, he had proposed no financial change, except an increase of the Carriage Duty to relieve the Highway Rates. He now raised the Income Tax from 5d. to 6½d., or to 8d. for the half year, within which the whole of the increase was to be

collected. This covered the vote of credit to which the House agreed on July 27, but which turned out to be a very small part of what interference in Egypt was to cost us. On August 18 the House of Commons adjourned till October 24, for the purpose of dealing with Gladstone's resolutions on procedure. These were not passed till December 2, when Parliament was at last prorogued. The first resolution, providing that closure must be voted by more than 200 members, or if the minority were less than 40 by more than 100, was not carried till November 10. The most important of the other rules were that which established Grand Committees, and that which provided that opposed business should not be taken after half-past twelve.

After the prorogation several changes were made in the Cabinet. Gladstone gave up the Chancellorship of the Exchequer to Mr. Childers; Lord Hartington became Secretary for War; Lord Kimberley for India; and Lord Derby joined the Liberal Government for the first time as Secretary of State for the Colonies. On September 1, Archbishop Tait died, and Gladstone gave satisfaction to his political opponents, as well as to his ecclesiastical friends, by nominating for the Primacy Dr. Benson, Bishop of Truro, one of the youngest prelates on the Bench.



[Photo by Bedford.

THE TEMPLE OF PEACE (THE LIBRARY, HAWARDEN).

The labours of this protracted session were too much even for Gladstone's strength. His health broke down, for the time; he was ordered to the South of France, and though Parliament did not meet in 1883 till February 15, he was unable to be present at the opening of the session.

He returned, however, before Easter, and, on April 26, in the debate upon the second reading of the Affirmation Bill, he delivered one of the most eloquent speeches ever heard in the House of Commons. The Bill was a very simple one, for enabling any member of Parliament to make an affirmation instead of taking an oath. But it was, of course, regarded as a Bradlaugh Relief Bill, and attacked with violence accordingly. Gladstone showed how vain were the fears of those who resisted the entrance into Parliament of Catholics and Jews. The Catholics had not impaired the Protestantism nor the Jews the Christianity of England. He did not shrink from dealing with the purely religious aspect of the question, and the last part of his speech reads like a sermon. What, he asked, was the value of pure Theism? Quoting some magnificent lines of Lucretius, he argued that Agnosticism and not Atheism was the special danger of the time. In a peroration of singular beauty he implored the

House not to connect the truths of religion with the sense of political and personal injustice. The Bill, however, was, on May 3, rejected by 292 votes against 289.

On the 4th, Mr. Bradlaugh had again appeared to take the oath, Gladstone once more declined to interfere, and Sir Stafford Northcote carried another motion that Bradlaugh should not be permitted to go through a meaningless form. Gladstone supported the previous question, which was moved by Mr. Labouchere.

At a meeting of the party held in the Foreign Office on May 29, Gladstone, dealing with the requirements of public business, and the small progress hitherto made with Government Bills, indicated the Corrupt Practices Bill as one which it was peculiarly essential to pass. This Bill, which became law before the end of the session, did a good deal to check the more obvious forms of bribery. But its most useful feature was the pecuniary limit which it imposed even upon legitimate expenditure in proportion to the size of the constituency. Besides this, the principal measures of the year were Mr. Chamberlain's Bankruptcy Act, which gave jurisdiction, in cases of insolvency, to the Board of Trade, and the Agricultural Holdings Act, which conferred upon

farmers the right of compensation for improvements.

Before the summer was over the case of Mr. Bradlaugh cropped up once more. On July 8 he wrote to Gladstone announcing his intention of taking his seat. Gladstone, who, since his first defeat on the question, had always disclaimed responsibility, forwarded the letter to Sir Stafford Northcote, who again carried a resolution excluding Bradlaugh from the precincts of the House. Gladstone declined to vote one way or the other. On July 27 he had the difficult task of defending a proposal to charge the revenues of India with a seventh part of the money spent upon the Egyptian campaign. He did so on the rather flimsy ground that the Suez Canal was an Indian interest. Just before the close of the session, after protracted debates on the Irish Estimates, Gladstone, rising above the sordid level of mutual recrimination, made a dignified and pathetic appeal to the Irish members, in which he implored them to ask themselves what good purpose could be served by the constant use of inflammatory language. It was the sort of speech which only he could have made. But Mr. Healy, to whom it was specially directed, after expressing personal admiration of the Prime Minister, replied that the only thing which pre-

vented war between the two countries was physical force. In September of this year, Gladstone, accompanied by his old friend Mr. Tennyson, took a short trip on Sir Donald Currie's ship, the *Pembroke Castle*, to the North of Scotland, and afterwards to Copenhagen, where they met several Royal personages, including the Czar. At Kirkwall, where the Prime Minister and the Poet Laureate both received the freedom of the borough, Gladstone made the most graceful of his occasional speeches, contrasting the perishable nature of the statesman's fame with the immortal renown of the great poet. One result of this voyage appeared in the *London Gazette* of the following January, when it was announced that her Majesty had conferred a peerage upon Mr. Tennyson, the first poet who entered the House of Lords as such. It was on January 9, 1884, at Hawarden, that Gladstone delivered his famous speech on jam. A Prime Minister on jam is an easy subject for ridicule; but Gladstone's advice, that more time and trouble should be given to the cultivation of fruit, was adopted with great profit in several parts of England.

The session of 1884 was again disturbed by Mr. Bradlaugh, who, on February 9, duly introduced by two other members, came up to the table, and for

the second time administered the oath to himself. His object was to obtain a legal decision upon the question whether he was qualified to take an oath, and in this he succeeded. For, although Sir Stafford Northcote again moved and carried a motion that he should not be allowed to go through this form, he voted in the division. The House decided by a majority that his vote should be disallowed. But he voted in that division, and as it was obvious that this process could be indefinitely repeated, the matter was not further pressed. He could now be sued for a penalty if he had not taken the oath according to law, and therefore the question was ripe for decision by the judges. Meanwhile, in case he had vacated his seat, he applied for the Chiltern Hundreds, and was re-elected at Northampton. But the House again excluded him from its precincts, in spite of a solemn protest from Gladstone, who reminded them that Bradlaugh had appealed to the law.

A far more serious question soon engaged the attention of Parliament. In November 1883 an Egyptian army, under Hicks Pasha, a former colonel in the Indian service, had been defeated and destroyed by the forces of the Mahdi in the Soudan. The Egyptian garrisons were in great danger, and, on January 18, General Gordon, of Chinese fame, who had once been Governor-General of the Soudan,

undertook, at the request of the British Government, to effect their relief by peaceful means. After an interview with Sir Evelyn Baring, afterwards Lord Cromer, at Cairo, he left for Khartoum without a military escort, and accompanied only by his aide-de-camp, Colonel Stewart. But on February 12 it was announced that the garrison of Sinkat had been cut to pieces; and when, on the same evening, Sir Stafford Northcote rose to move a vote of censure on the Egyptian policy of the Government, Gladstone's position was a difficult one. He defended himself, however, on the double ground that the great source of evil in Egypt was the dual control which he had inherited from his predecessors, and that since the British occupation began valuable reforms had been carried out. As for the future, there was to be no reconquest of the Soudan, but the garrison of Tokar was to be relieved from Suakim. Adopting a phrase from Sir Wilfrid Lawson, he said the policy of the Government was to "rescue and retire." The motion was rejected by the narrow majority of eighteen, and a similar motion in the House of Lords was carried by 100. A few days after the division came the news that Tokar had surrendered to Osman Digna. Recurring to the subject on April 3, Gladstone declared that Gordon had full authority to return whenever he

thought proper, and denounced the plea for intervention as merely made in the interests of the bondholders. Meanwhile the public became anxious about Gordon's fate, and on May 12 another vote of censure was moved, this time by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who complained that the Government were doing nothing at all. Gladstone replied that Gordon had never asked for soldiers, and had started on the understanding that there was to be no invasion of the Mahdi's territory. On this occasion both Mr. Forster and Mr. Goschen severely criticized the Government from the Ministerial benches; but the motion was rejected by a majority of twenty-eight.

On June 28 a Conference of the Powers, with Lord Granville in the chair, met in London to arrange the finances of Egypt. But on August 2 Gladstone had to tell the House of Commons that it had failed to arrive at any result, and on August 11 Lord Northbrook was sent to examine the whole subject at Cairo.

One important piece of philanthropic business, in which both parties concurred, distinguished the session of 1884. On February 22, Lord Salisbury moved for a Royal Commission to inquire into the housing of the poor. To this the Government at once assented. Sir Charles Dilke was selected by

Gladstone to be chairman, among his colleagues being the Prince of Wales, Cardinal Manning, and Lord Salisbury himself. At the close of the debate on the Address in the House of Commons, Sir Henry Brand resigned the office of speaker, and was succeeded by Mr. Arthur Peel. The Speaker is of course formally elected by the House; but the nomination comes from the Prime Minister, and experience soon proved what an admirable choice Gladstone had made.

On February 27, Lord Derby concluded with President Kruger, and two other Boer delegates, the Convention of London, which modified the Convention of Pretoria in favour of the Transvaal. The suzerainty of the Queen over the South African Republic was in terms abolished, though the precise effect of the clause which did so was afterwards disputed. It was, however, provided that treaties between the Transvaal and all foreign Powers except the Free State should be subject to the approval of the British Government. The policy of this Convention did not come before the House of Commons till July 30, when the debate turned chiefly upon the sufficiency of the protection exercised by the paramount Power over the native tribes. Gladstone defended the settlement, and also the restoration of Cetewayo, which he de-

scribed as the only possible amends for the iniquities of the Zulu war. The very important questions which afterwards arose between the British Government and the Boers were not then present to any one's mind.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COUNTY FRANCHISE.

THE Franchise Bill, which was the principal work of this session, and which, in the opinion of many Liberals, had been too long postponed, was introduced by Gladstone on February 29. Although his speech lasted for two hours, and was a luminous exposition of the whole subject, the purport of the Bill was extremely simple. He gave to householders and to lodgers in counties precisely the same suffrage enjoyed by the same classes in the boroughs. He also conferred a new right of voting, called the Service Franchise, on men who occupied houses and rooms in respect of their employment. Gladstone made a powerful appeal on behalf of the agricultural labourers, who would be chiefly affected by the measure, and whose good qualities as citizens he extolled. The Bill would, he calculated, enfranchise about two millions, raising the electorate from three millions to five. Dealing with the argument that the extension

of the franchise should be accompanied by a re-distribution of seats, he said that to take this course would overload the Bill; but he admitted that franchise must be followed by redistribution. This was the point on which the Conservative Party, who did not oppose the principle of the Bill, elected to fight. On the second reading, which was moved on March 24, Lord John Manners, afterwards Duke of Rutland, proposed an amendment to the effect that the Bill was incomplete without a readjustment of political power. He cited the precedent set by Lord Derby, then Lord Stanley, who in 1866 had met in a similar way the Reform Bill of Lord Russell. The debate was a long one. Gladstone did not reply till April 7, when he pledged himself to bring in and, if he could, to carry, a Redistribution Bill before Parliament was dissolved. The second reading of the Bill was carried on the same night by a majority of 130. The most important amendment moved in Committee (May 20) was one to exclude Ireland from the scope of the Bill. The Irish peasantry were, it was said, both poorer and less well educated than the English. The amendment, moved by Mr. Brodrick, was supported by Mr. W. H. Smith; but the Opposition were divided. Lord Randolph Churchill ridiculed what he called the "Mud Cabin"

objection, declaring that there was far less difference between the cottage of the English and the cabin of the Irish labourer than there was between the palatial residence of Mr. Smith and his own humble abode. Gladstone in his speech addressed himself especially to the Irish members, and in an eloquent apostrophe assured them that the only weapon which would enable them to injure the British Empire would be the injustice of England. The amendment was rejected by 332 to 137, and the Bill was read a third time without a division on June 26.

In the House of Lords, however, the struggle was renewed with more serious results. Lord Cairns, on July 7, carried an amendment to the second reading, by 205 votes to 146, which had the effect of suspending the Bill until a scheme of redistribution was introduced. In the division on this amendment, Gladstone was supported by Archbishop Benson and almost all the other bishops present. In the debate he found unexpected allies in the Duke of Argyll and Lord Wemyss. The refusal of the Lords to pass the Bill excited much popular feeling, and a procession of agricultural labourers, who marched through the streets of London with hop-poles on July 21, was received with sympathy, even among those not usually friendly to such demonstrations. Gladstone announced to

a meeting of his party, and to the House of Commons on July 10, that Parliament would be prorogued as soon as possible, and that the Bill would be reintroduced in an autumn session. Lord Wemyss, taking advantage of the fact that the Lords had not technically thrown out the Bill, and that, therefore, the second reading might be moved again, suggested, on July 17, that it should be passed, on the understanding that the autumn session would be devoted to redistribution. To this Gladstone, through Lord Granville, readily acceded. But Lord Salisbury declined, on the ground that the Lords would then be obliged to pass any Redistribution Bill the Government brought in, on pain of an appeal to the new constituencies without any redistribution at all. An offer made by Gladstone, through Lord Granville and Lord Cairns, to Lord Salisbury, that if the Lords passed the Franchise Bill the Government would pledge themselves not to dissolve until a Redistribution Bill had been passed, was equally unsuccessful. The prorogation of Parliament put an end to the Bill.

During the recess, Gladstone paid a visit to his constituents, who received him, if possible, with greater enthusiasm than before. Speaking at Edinburgh on August 30, he protested against the claim

of the Lords to force a dissolution, or, as he put it, to pass capital sentence on the Commons. The next day he dealt with the Egyptian question, saying that it was honour and plighted faith which led to the occupation, as the Government were bound to carry out even the unwise engagements of their predecessors. At this time the conflict between the two Houses showed no signs of a peaceful solution. But it was observed that while Gladstone was in Scotland he went to Balmoral, and that he was followed by the Duke of Richmond, who soon afterwards received a visit from Lord Salisbury and Lord Cairns.

On October 8 there appeared in the *Standard* what purported to be the Ministerial plan of redistribution. The publication was of course surreptitious, and the authenticity of the document was denied. But it turned out to have been drawn up by a committee of the Cabinet, and, though not a final scheme, it undoubtedly represented the general ideas of the Government, and the knowledge of their intentions suggested a way out of the difficulty. It took some time, however, to compose the quarrel. When Parliament met on October 23, Gladstone said that the question was whether the representative or the unrepresentative majority was to prevail. The debates on the new

Bill, which was the same as the old, were interrupted by an attack made on October 30 by Lord Randolph Churchill upon Mr. Chamberlain for organizing a riot at a Conservative meeting in Aston Park, near Birmingham, where Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord Randolph himself were the speakers. Gladstone stoutly defended his colleague; but Lord Randolph made a great impression on the House, and the majority for Mr. Chamberlain was only thirty-six. The second reading of the second Franchise Bill was moved on November 6, when Colonel Stanley, afterwards sixteenth Earl of Derby, repeated the amendment of Lord John Manners. Next day the Bill was read a second time by a majority of 140; no amendments were made in Committee, and on November 13 it was back in the Lords. On the 17th the terms of the arrangement, now seen to be inevitable, were announced by Gladstone and Granville. If the Lords passed the Franchise Bill at once, the Government would consult the leaders of the Opposition upon the details of their Redistribution Bill before bringing it in, and would then proceed with it forthwith. On the 18th the Lords read the Bill a second time without a division; but the Committee was postponed for a fortnight, to give time for the proposed consultation. In this the Government were repre-

sented by Gladstone and Sir Charles Dilke; the Opposition by Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote. An agreement was soon made, and on December 1 Gladstone, in a business-like statement, explained the Redistribution Bill. All boroughs whose population was below 15,000 were to be merged in the counties. Boroughs whose population was under 50,000, and which had two members, were to lose one of them. London was to have thirty-seven additional members, though the City would lose two out of four. The total number of members was to be raised from 652 to 670, England receiving six of the eighteen, and Scotland twelve. The representation of Ireland was not to be touched. Boroughs and counties were to be divided into districts, each returning a single member, except the City of London and towns with a population between 50,000 and 165,000. A boundary commission was at once appointed, of which Sir John Lambert, Secretary to the Local Government Board, was chairman. On December 4 this Bill was read a second time in the House of Commons, and on the 6th the Royal assent was given to the Franchise Bill. Mr. Courtney, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, resigned his office, being opposed to single members and in favour of proportional representation.

On January 8, 1885, Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, eldest son of the Prince of Wales, attained his majority. The Prime Minister, writing "as the oldest among the confidential servants of her Majesty," addressed to the young Prince an earnest and dignified letter upon this important epoch in his life, and upon his prospect of occupying at some distant date a throne which, he said, "to me at least appears the most illustrious in the world." The letter derives a special and melancholy interest from the premature death of the Duke of Clarence in January 1892.

CHAPTER XIX.

GLADSTONE AND GORDON.

THE weakest point in Gladstone's second Administration, and the one which led to their ultimate defeat, was their policy in Egypt, if, indeed, they can be said to have had an Egyptian policy at all. An expedition under Lord Wolseley had been sent, in the autumn of 1884, to rescue Gordon and relieve Khartoum. But on February 5, 1885, the terrible news reached London that Khartoum had fallen on January 26. There was no specific information of Gordon's fate, but the public rightly assumed that he had perished with the garrison which he had vainly attempted to defend. Lord Wolseley's expedition was just too late. A Cabinet was immediately summoned, and 7,000 men ordered to Suakim. At this crisis, on February 9, Lord Rosebery showed his chivalrous devotion to his chief by joining the Government, which had just received such a formidable blow, as Lord Privy Seal and First Commissioner of Works. The salary

attached to the sinecure office of Privy Seal was from this time abolished. Parliament met on February 19, and Gladstone announced that the power of the Mahdi was to be overthrown at Khartoum. He went on, in language which made a painful impression even on his supporters, to argue that Gordon had not availed himself of the means of securing his personal safety which were open to him. He afterwards explained that he meant no reproach to Gordon, but was merely defending the Government. On February 24, Sir Stafford Northcote moved a vote of censure on the Government for their failure to rescue Gordon, and Mr. John Morley proposed an amendment against the policy of overthrowing the Mahdi. Gladstone was thus attacked simultaneously on both sides. In reply, he pointed out that Gordon had never asked for British troops, and that he went to Khartoum on an entirely peaceful mission. As for the reconquest of the Soudan, he compared it to chaining the sands of the desert when the winds were howling over them. Acknowledging that the situation in Egypt was critical, he expressed a hope that they should not present to the world the spectacle of a disparaged Government and a doubtful House of Commons. On February 26, Sir Stafford Northcote's motion was rejected by the narrow majority

of fourteen. But the significance of the division was somewhat diminished by the fact that forty Irish Home Rulers, who did not share the views of the Conservatives, voted with them against the Government. The Lords carried a vote of censure by 189 to 68. Gladstone said very little against Mr. Morley's amendment, which indeed the Government, though it was defeated by a large majority, practically adopted. For on May 11 Lord Hartington announced the abandonment of the Soudan; and the Mahdi was not overthrown, though he soon afterwards died.

Meanwhile, the relations between England and Russia had become so unsatisfactory that on March 26 the reserves were called out, and within a month the two countries were on the brink of war. The difficulty arose out of an Anglo-Russian Commission which had been appointed to settle the boundary between Russia and Afghanistan. Sir Peter Lumsden, the British Commissioner, waited for his Russian colleague, but the Russian colleague did not come. On April 8, Gladstone informed the House of Commons that it was true the Russians, under General Komaroff, had attacked an Afghan force and occupied Penjdeh, which was undoubtedly Afghan territory. This he described as an act of unprovoked aggression, and he admitted that the

state of affairs was grave, though not hopeless. On April 21 he gave notice that he would ask for a vote of credit to the amount of eleven millions, of which four and a half would be for the Soudan. The remainder was intended for the Navy in case of a European war. The Prime Minister moved this vote on April 27, in a speech which took the House by storm, and swept away all opposition. He dwelt on the country's obligation to the Ameer, which any Government would be bound to fulfil, and upon the forbearance which had been shown in dealing with Russia. He closed an eloquent and powerful appeal to the patriotism of the House by declaring that, subject only to justice and to honour, he and his colleagues would continuously labour for the purposes of peace. When he sat down the vote was at once agreed to, amid the general cheering of the House. On May 4, Gladstone was able to state that Great Britain and Russia had accepted the arbitration of a friendly sovereign, who was afterwards announced to be the King of Denmark. But this arrangement was never carried out, and the matter was finally settled, after Gladstone left office, by direct negotiation.

Once more, and only once, Egypt came before this Parliament. The financial mission of Lord Northbrook, the first Lord of the Admiralty, who

had left England for Cairo, in company with Lord Wolseley, on August 30, 1884, resulted in complete failure, and the financial position of the Egyptian Government was desperate. In these circumstances the Powers jointly proposed a loan of £9,000,000, and on March 26, 1885, Gladstone moved in the House of Commons a guarantee for the British share. He protested that the loan would give the Powers no right of controlling Egypt, which, in a strictly political sense, was true. But objection was not unnaturally taken to the right of financial interference which it would involve, and the motion was only carried by a majority of forty-eight.

On May 15, just before Parliament separated for the Whitsuntide recess, Gladstone suddenly announced that the Government would ask Parliament to renew some "valuable and equitable" provisions of the Irish Crimes Act. This gave much dissatisfaction to the Radicals, and Mr. John Morley gave notice that he would oppose any such measure. He had, however, no opportunity of doing so. The end was at hand. On June 8, Mr. Childers moved the second reading of the Budget Bill. The Budget was extremely unpopular. The expenditure of the country had run up, for the first time, to £100,000,000, then considered a gigantic sum, and, including the vote of credit, the Chancellor of

the Exchequer had to estimate for a deficit of £15,000,000. The Opposition attacked the Budget in form. The particular points which they chose to assail, and which were embodied in an amendment to the second reading by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, were the increased duties on beer and spirits, and the addition to the Succession Duty on land, which was not accompanied, as the Conservatives argued it should have been, by a relief of local rates. Sir Michael, in his speech, suggested that the duty on tea might have been raised instead of the duty on alcohol, and of this rather unfortunate suggestion Gladstone, in his reply, made the most. He called upon the House not to interfere with the principle of adjusting direct to indirect taxation. But the amendment was carried by 264 to 252, and the Government at once resigned. Six Liberals and thirty-nine Home Rulers voted with the Tories in this division, from which many Liberals abstained. On June 12, when Gladstone formally declared the resignation of himself and his colleagues, the Redistribution Bill, which had not been seriously altered in Committee, was passed in the House of Lords, and thus the work of electoral reform was complete. On June 13 the Queen, who was at Balmoral, sent for Lord Salisbury. Lord Salisbury objected to taking office in a minority without an

assurance that the Liberal Party would not impede the remaining business of the session; and on this subject he had a long correspondence with Gladstone, through the Queen, which was read by Gladstone in the House without comment on June 24. Lord Salisbury, on June 17, in his first letter, pointed out that the Redistribution Act, coupled with the Registration Act, made it impossible to dissolve Parliament before November. He therefore thought that he had a right to ask for all the time of the House required to vote the supplies of the year, and for a promise that this business would not be obstructed. Gladstone replied on the same day that he had no intention of embarrassing the Government, but that it was not in his power to give any definite pledge. On June 18, Gladstone went to Windsor, and had an audience of the Queen. On the same day Lord Salisbury wrote to her Majesty that he could not accept office except under the conditions he had prescribed; but Gladstone refused to go beyond his former letter. On June 19, Lord Salisbury again asked that there should be precedence for financial business, and no opposition to an eightpenny Income Tax. Gladstone again declined to give any specific undertaking; but repeated, in more emphatic language, that he had no intention or desire to harass the

Ministers of the Crown. With this, Lord Salisbury, at the earnest request of the Queen, had to be content, and on June 25 he informed the House of Lords that he had undertaken to form an Administration. Making a precedent in English history, he became both Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The Queen offered Gladstone an earldom, but this he respectfully declined; and on June 29 he wrote to his committee in Midlothian that he was prepared to contest the county once more.

The new Ministers in the House of Commons having been re-elected, Mr. Bradlaugh, for the last time in this Parliament, presented himself to take the oath. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who had become Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, moved that it should reaffirm its resolutions of last year, which prevented Bradlaugh from taking the oath or coming within the precincts of the House. Gladstone supported an amendment, moved by Mr. Hopwood, in favour of dealing with the difficulty by legislation; but this was rejected by 263 to 219, and Mr. Bradlaugh withdrew. With that the long controversy ended. For, after the General Election, Mr. Speaker Peel ruled that the new Parliament could take no cognizance of what had been done in the old, and that

Mr. Bradlaugh, being one of the members returned for Northampton, had as much right to take the oath as anybody else. On July 7, Gladstone, in a speech which Lord Randolph Churchill, now Secretary of State for India, described as magnanimous, promised to assist the new Government so far as he could. He commented, however, upon the declaration of Lord Carnarvon, the Lord-Lieutenant, that he was prepared to administer Ireland with the ordinary law, and remarked that whenever he himself acted in harmony with the representatives of the Irish people, his doing so was made the subject of outrageous imputations. The Government, he said, had incurred a grave responsibility; but it was theirs, and he left it with them. Writing to Mr. Childers on July 16, he pointed out that a Conservative Government had cast upon property, in the shape of additional Income Tax, the whole increase of expenditure which was to be defrayed out of revenue.

Both sides had ample time to prepare for the General Election, and it was not till September 18 that Gladstone issued his address to his constituents. In this document, which was of unusual length, he dealt in a spirit of singular moderation with a great variety of subjects. He expressed a hope that it would be possible at an early date to withdraw

British troops from Egypt; he proposed a reform of the land laws, chiefly by the abolition of entails, and of all settlements which impeded the free exchange of land; he pleaded for unity in the Liberal Party, and for the freedom of all sections who accepted its main principles to pursue their special objects. The disestablishment of the English Church he relegated, in a famous phrase, to the dim and distant courses of the future. To Ireland he referred in some remarkable sentences, which attracted at the time less attention than they deserved. "In my opinion," he said, "not now for the first time delivered, the limit is clear within which any desires of Ireland, constitutionally ascertained, may, and beyond which they cannot, receive the assent of Parliament. To maintain the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and all the authority of Parliament necessary for the conservation of that unity, is the first duty of every representative of the people. Subject to this governing principle, every grant to portions of the country of enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs, is, in my view, not a source of danger, but a means of averting it, and is in the nature of a new guarantee for increased cohesion, happiness, and strength."

Gladstone's address was regarded by the Radicals as disappointingly tame, and it led Mr. Chamberlain

to put forward more advanced proposals, which made him for a time the most popular of all speakers at Radical meetings. On October 2, Gladstone wrote to contradict a statement, made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the late Government had decided to dispense with all coercion. He said that, on the contrary, they had determined to retain the power of changing the venue, the right to summon special juries in criminal cases, and the clauses against boycotting. On November 9 he started for his campaign in Scotland, where he again dwelt upon the need for Liberal unity. Even in Scotland he disappointed many of his most ardent supporters by intimating that the time was not ripe for the disestablishment of the Scottish Church. As for Ireland, he held that she was entitled to the utmost measure of local self-government consistent with the integrity of the United Kingdom. Mr. Parnell declared that this was the most important deliverance on Irish affairs which had hitherto come from any British statesman, and called upon Gladstone to say particularly what his plan of Irish self-government was. Speaking at West Calder on November 17, Gladstone declined this challenge, saying that Ireland had not yet spoken, and that he awaited her verdict. On November 21 appeared a manifesto from the Irish Nationalist Party, signed by Mr. T.

P. O'Connor, attacking the Liberals in violent terms, and urging all Irish electors in Great Britain to vote against those who had coerced their country. On November 23, Gladstone, turning aside, as he so readily did, from party politics, delivered an address upon the historical associations of Edinburgh, to which he had just presented a new market cross in place of the old one long since destroyed. On November 27 the result of the Midlothian election was declared. Gladstone's majority surpassed all expectation. He defeated Mr. Dalrymple, the Conservative candidate, by more than two to one, the numbers being—for Gladstone 7,879, for Dalrymple 3,245.

But the English elections had not gone altogether in favour of the Liberal Party. The fall of Khartoum and the death of Gordon weighed heavily on the public mind. Professional politicians, who never cared two straws for Gordon, alive or dead, made the most of them. But they seriously affected all classes of the community, Liberals as well as Conservatives, and they undoubtedly turned many votes. In the English boroughs the strange doctrine of Fair Trade, which would have limited the policy of free exchange by confining it to our intercourse with countries that were not Protectionist, found many supporters, and Conservatives won in consequence many seats.

The passage in these Midlothian speeches which was best remembered by Gladstone's opponents, and of which, after his conversion to Home Rule, they made most use, occurred in his speech at Edinburgh on November 9, when he called upon the country to return a Liberal majority which would be strong enough to act against a combination of Conservatives and Parnellites. Even Liberals, he added, could not be trusted to deal fairly with the Irish Question if it were in the power of the Irish members to turn them out at any moment.

CHAPTER XX.

HOME RULE.

THE final result of the election was a new House of Commons, composed of 335 Liberals, 249 Conservatives, and 86 followers of Mr. Parnell. Thus, the Conservatives and the Parnellites combined, as they had been combined at the General Election, exactly balanced the Liberal Party in the House. Such a confused state of things had never before existed, and as Parliament was not to meet till January, every possible form of speculation about the future was freely advanced. But on December 16 there appeared, simultaneously in the *Standard* and the *Leeds Mercury*, a paragraph which caused intense excitement. The purport of it was that Gladstone had made up his mind to propose a scheme of Home Rule, with an Irish Legislature sitting at Dublin, and an Irish Executive responsible for Irish affairs. Gladstone at once telegraphed that this statement was published without his knowledge or authority. But no stronger or direct denial

was forthcoming, and it was observed that Mr. Herbert Gladstone, one of the members for Leeds, had arrived there from Hawarden just before the appearance of the paragraph.

This announcement of Gladstone's views on Home Rule, or what he called a speculation on them, took his former colleagues, most of whom he had not consulted, by surprise. Lord Hartington seized the first opportunity of declaring that he knew nothing about them, and Mr. Chamberlain spoke as if they were new to him. But it afterwards transpired that, towards the end of December, Gladstone had, both in conversation and by letter, urged Lord Salisbury, through Mr. Balfour, to take up the Irish Question, stating his own opinion that it ought not to be made a subject of dispute between parties. Mr. Balfour replied in courteous language that Lord Salisbury acknowledged the friendly tone of Gladstone's communications, but that, as Parliament was to meet so soon, he did not think it desirable to forestall the statement of policy which he would then have to make. To this Gladstone rejoined that he neither expected nor desired anything of the kind. He had made his offer, and was satisfied. In talking to Mr. Balfour, though not in his letters, Gladstone had expressed the belief that, unless the Irish problem were speedily solved,



MR. GLADSTONE IN OLD AGE.

(From the portrait by J. McLure Hamilton in the Luxembourg Gallery, Paris.)

the party of violence and assassination would get the upper hand in Ireland. Parliament met on January 12, but the Address was not moved till the 21st, and meanwhile Gladstone refused to receive a deputation of Irish landlords, headed by the Mayor of Belfast, who desired, as they said, relief from the tyranny of the Land League, on the ground that to do so would be encroaching on the functions of the Government. On January 21, speaking to the Address, he declared that Home Rule was not a question of party; and turning to the new members, he reminded them that, as an "old Parliamentary hand," it would not be wise for him to make a premature disclosure of his plans. But he significantly added that the maintenance of the Empire, though an excellent object, in which they were all agreed, was not enough to constitute a policy. The resignation of Lord Carnarvon, and the appointment of Mr. W. H. Smith to be Chief Secretary, with a seat in the Cabinet, were immediately followed by a notice from Sir Michael Hicks-Beach that a Bill would be introduced for the suppression of the National League. This notice, as Gladstone afterwards said, convinced him that the Conservatives would not deal with Home Rule, and that he must therefore take his own independent course. An opportunity for displacing the Government

immediately occurred. On January 26, Mr. Jesse Collings moved an amendment to the Address in favour of giving local bodies compulsory power to obtain land for allotments. This proposal, under the name of "Three Acres and a Cow," had been very popular in the counties at the General Election, and the name of Mr. Collings was generally associated with it. Gladstone spoke in support of the amendment, and so did Mr. Chamberlain. The Government, assisted by Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen, opposed it, but it was carried against them by a majority of seventy-nine.

Lord Salisbury at once resigned, and on February 1 the Queen sent for Gladstone. A formidable split in the Liberal Party followed. Lord Hartington refused to join a Government pledged to consider favourably the question of Home Rule, and his example was followed by Mr. Goschen. Sir Henry James, though offered his choice of the Woolsack or the Home Office, also declined. It was known that Mr. Bright and Lord Selborne were hostile to any material change in the Act of Union. On the other hand, Gladstone had the invaluable aid of Lord Spencer, whose firm administration of Ireland had broken up the most dangerous and murderous conspiracy that ever existed in that country. Sir Farrer Herschell, formerly Solicitor-General, became

Lord Chancellor, and proved a tower of strength to his party in the House of Lords. Lord Rosebery's appointment to the Foreign Office gave general satisfaction. Lord Granville joined the Cabinet as Colonial Secretary. Mr. John Morley, who had the confidence of the Irish Nationalists, became Chief Secretary for Ireland, with a seat in the Cabinet, where Lord Aberdeen, the new Lord-Lieutenant, had no place. Gladstone, in his address to his constituents, reiterated the necessity of preserving Imperial unity, but urged at the same time that no half measures would suffice, and that, in dealing with Ireland, they must go to the source and seat of mischief.

But the new Government were unlucky from the first. On February 8 there were serious riots in Trafalgar Square, due to the simultaneous meeting of unemployed workmen and of the Social Democratic Federation. The rioters marched, without resistance from the police, through Pall Mall into Piccadilly, where, and in South Audley Street, they smashed the windows of shops and pillaged their contents. Mr. Childers, who had only been Home Secretary for a few hours, was not really responsible for this catastrophe, which led to the resignation of Sir Edmund Henderson, the Commissioner of Metropolitan

Police. But it undoubtedly damaged the Government, whose prosecution of the Social Democratic leaders ended in a verdict of acquittal. On February 18, Parliament met again after the re-election of Ministers; but all that Gladstone would say at that time was, that there would be no penal legislation for Ireland. In the House of Lords, Lord Rosebery announced that England had joined the other powers in preventing Greece from going to war with Turkey. This policy was not agreeable to the Radicals, but it was not seriously challenged. When the Army Estimates were proposed, the Government came very near to defeat. Mr. Howard Vincent moved for an increase in the capitation grant to Volunteers. Gladstone's view of this motion, though consistent and characteristic, came upon most of his followers as a surprise. Taking the matter out of the hands of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, the Secretary for War, he at once rose, and, speaking with great emphasis, declared that he would not take orders from the House of Commons to increase the national expenditure. The House might get a Minister who was ready to do so, but it would not be the Minister who stood at that table. The motion was only defeated by a majority of twenty-one. On March 26 another blow fell upon the

Government. Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan announced their resignation. Mr. Chamberlain, for whom higher office was expected, had entered the Cabinet with some reluctance as President of the Local Government Board. His place was taken by Mr. Stansfeld. Mr. Trevelyan, who had been Secretary for Scotland, was succeeded by Lord Dalhousie. Before he left the Government, Mr. Trevelyan, on February 25, had introduced a Bill for giving fair rents and fixity of tenure to the crofters in the Highlands of Scotland. This Bill, which received the Royal Assent on June 25, was the only legislation of any importance carried through the Parliament of 1885.

On April 8, Gladstone brought in his Home Rule Bill. He began by observing that, in the opinion of the Cabinet, the question of Home Rule was closely connected with the question of the land, and that, but for the fear of overloading the measure, he would have dealt with them both at the same time. As it was, a Land Bill would almost immediately follow. He proceeded to argue that the abandonment of coercion by the late Government had made it for the future impossible, and that an alternative must be found. The great difficulty of governing Ireland was, he said, that the law came to the Irish people in a

"foreign garb." He dwelt at some length on the analogy of federal Home Rule in Sweden and Norway, and in Austria and Hungary. He emphatically protested that he had no intention of repealing the Union, for that would be to restore Grattan's Parliament, which was absolutely independent. He proposed, however, to create a legislative body, which would sit in Dublin, for dealing with affairs exclusively Irish. The Irish Representative Peers would cease to sit in the House of Lords, and the Irish members would cease to sit in the House of Commons. Ireland would tax herself in all branches of revenue except Customs and Excise. The balance of Customs and Excise duties, after the discharge of Ireland's obligations to the British Government, would be paid into the Irish Exchequer. Certain powers would be reserved to the Imperial Parliament. These would be questions which affected the Crown, the Army, the Navy, and foreign or colonial relations. The Irish Legislature would be expressly prohibited from endowing any religious body. In that Legislature there would be two orders. The first order would consist of the twenty-eight Representative Peers, and seventy-five other members elected every ten years on a property franchise of £200 a year. This body would have the right of

delaying, but not of ultimately defeating, Bills passed by the other and more strictly elective order. The second order would consist of the 103 Irish members then sitting at Westminster, and 101 others elected in the same way. The Viceroy would hold office permanently, and the disability of Catholics for the Viceroyalty would be removed. The present judges would have the right of retiring on full pensions, and all civil servants in Ireland would have the same right after two years. The Royal Irish Constabulary, so long as it continued to exist, would remain under Imperial control. The actual cost of that force was then £1,500,000, but Ireland would not be called upon to pay more than £1,000,000. The remainder would be supplied from the Imperial Exchequer. Gladstone expressed a hope that the Royal Irish, who were rather a military than a civil body, could be safely disbanded when Home Rule had had time to work. To the general expenditure of the United Kingdom Ireland would contribute a proportion of one in twenty-six. At the conclusion of his speech, Gladstone referred to the complete success of Home Rule in the British Colonies, and drew from that fact the inference that it would be equally successful in Ireland.

The next day, Mr. Chamberlain rose to explain

the reasons for his resignation. But his speech was interrupted by Gladstone, when he attempted to deal with his objections to the Land Bill, which had not yet been introduced, and was known only to the Cabinet. This was the first public altercation between Mr. Chamberlain and his former chief. The debate lasted till April 13, when Gladstone replied. He then said that the exclusion of the Irish members, to which Mr. Chamberlain and other speakers had especially objected, as infringing the principle of no taxation without representation, was not vital to the Bill. Meeting the argument that the country had given the Government no "mandate" for Home Rule, he retorted that there was equally no mandate for coercion. He maintained that his plan held the field, and that, though it had many enemies, it had no rival.

The Bill was then read a first time without a division; and on April 16 Gladstone introduced the Land Purchase Bill. This he described as the second portion of the Ministerial scheme, and necessary for the maintenance of social order. England, he said, was responsible for the power of the Irish landlords, and for the mischief which some of them had done. It was, therefore, incumbent upon Parliament to give them an opportunity of withdrawing from the country if

they did not like Home Rule. Accordingly, those of them who so desired would be bought out. The Irish Legislature would set up a State authority to be the instrument of purchase, and the requisite sum would be advanced through a three per cent. stock. All agricultural landlords would have the option of selling their estates, of which the occupiers would become the proprietors. But a tenant whose annual rent was less than £4 would not be compelled to buy, and in the congested districts the proprietor would be the State authority. The terms would be twenty years' purchase on judicial rents. Where no judicial rents had been fixed, the prices would be settled by the Land Court. The amount of the stock to be immediately issued would be £50,000,000, but it was possible that that sum might ultimately be more than doubled. The interest was to be collected by the State authority, and paid into the Treasury through a Receiver-General, who would be a British, not an Irish, officer. This Bill also was read a first time without a division; but it went no further. During the interval between the first and second readings of the Home Rule Bill, Gladstone wrote a letter to his constituents, in which he fully explained and justified his new Irish policy. He told them that he had received numerous expressions of sympathy

from British colonists, and he characterized Ireland as the one failure of the British race. The Land Bill, he said, was an offer to the Irish landlords, which they must accept or reject; and he reminded them that the sands were running in the hour-glass. He predicted that there could be only one end to the controversy now raised, and, in a phrase which excited much resentment, he described his opponents as consisting of "class and the dependants of class."

The debate on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill began on May 10, and was prolonged, with intervals, till June 7. Gladstone, in moving that the Bill be read a second time, intimated that he was not unwilling to reconsider the question of retaining the Irish members at Westminster, though he gave no hint of the manner in which this could be done. In a spirited peroration, he declared that the path of boldness was the path of safety, and he called upon his opponents to say what they considered was the alternative to Home Rule. Lord Hartington moved the rejection of the Bill in a powerful speech. It was assailed from both sides of the House, and, apart from Gladstone's own speeches, it was feebly defended, with the exception of a vigorous apology, in the classical sense of the term, from Mr. Morley, who spoke with genuine conviction and enthusiasm. The debate

had to be interrupted on May 20, in order that Mr. Morley might propose the renewal of the Arms Act for Ireland. This gave Gladstone an opportunity for attacking Lord Randolph Churchill on the subject of his recent declaration that if Home Rule were passed, Ulster would fight, and Ulster would be right. It was only, said the Prime Minister, the stability of our institutions which enabled such inflammatory utterances by public men to be made with impunity. The Nationalists contented themselves with dividing against the Bill as a protest, and they were almost alone in the Division Lobby. The Bill passed rapidly through both Houses, and received the Royal Assent on June 4. Meanwhile, the discussion of the Home Rule Bill dragged rather heavily, and the Government were accused by the Conservative Party of prolonging it in order to stir up public opinion in its favour. On May 27 a very important meeting of Liberals was held at the Foreign Office, to hear from Gladstone what course he proposed to take. He reminded them that there was one thing which even Parliament could not do, and that was to divest itself of its own powers. It must remain supreme, even if its supremacy were not expressly reserved in the Bill. As regarded the position of the Irish members, he was willing to consider any

plan for their retention which did not impair the efficiency of the House of Commons, or interfere with the autonomy of Ireland, and he suggested that they might have the right to vote whenever it was proposed to alter the relative taxation of Ireland. He added, that if the Bill were read a second time, the Government would proceed no further with it during that session, and that, whether Parliament were prorogued or adjourned, the Cabinet would reconsider the subject during the recess. When the House of Commons met the next day, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, having failed to obtain any further information from the Government, moved the adjournment of the House. He protested against the Prime Minister's ambiguity; declared that the Home Rule Bill had become merely a measure for the continuance of the Government in office; and demanded to know whether, if the second reading were carried, Parliament would be adjourned or prorogued. Gladstone, in a vehement reply, denounced this as an unjustifiable motion; repeated what he had said at the Foreign Office about the Irish members; and said that the possible reconstruction of the Bill only referred to that particular clause which excluded them from Westminster. This speech was a great disappointment to those Liberals who

hoped, like Mr. Chamberlain, that the Irish members would be definitely retained. The only other information extracted from the Government was, that if the Bill passed its present stage the Cabinet would advise the Queen to prorogue Parliament. The motion having been negatived, the debate on the second reading was resumed, and at last, on June 7, Gladstone rose to reply. His speech was admitted both by friends and foes to be, from a rhetorical point of view, one of the finest he ever delivered. He began with an appeal to the history of Canada, which had been brought from active rebellion to enthusiastic loyalty by the concession of Home Rule. He predicted that, if this controversy were prolonged, the hideous features of the transactions by which the Union was accomplished would inevitably be brought to light. He called upon the House to listen to the voice of Ireland, now, for the first time, clearly heard. He implored them not to strengthen the party of violence by rejecting her constitutional demands, and, in a picturesque though faulty image, he pronounced that the ebbing tide was with those who resisted the Bill, and the flowing tide with those who supported it. As soon as he sat down, the division was called, and the Bill was rejected by a majority of thirty. The Ayes to the right

were 343; the Noes to the left were 313. Ninety-three Liberals voted against the Bill; only one Conservative, Sir Robert Peel, voted in its favour. The Irish Nationalists were, of course, unanimous. Mr. Parnell, indeed, had received Gladstone's proposals with characteristic coldness, and had severely criticized the financial clauses; but he accepted the scheme as, upon the whole, satisfactory, while Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien gave it a much warmer welcome.

On June 8 the Cabinet met and decided that they would recommend her Majesty to dissolve Parliament. The Queen, not unnaturally, objected to a second dissolution within seven months. But Gladstone persisted, holding that any other course would be "showing the white feather," and the Queen gave way. On June 14, Gladstone issued his address to his constituents, in which he warned them that the only alternative to Home Rule was the renewal of the coercive legislation which had been tried throughout the century and had utterly failed. He described the union with Ireland as merely a paper union, which had been consummated by force and fraud. In conclusion, he argued that the only way to restore the efficiency of the Imperial Parliament was to give Irishmen the management of their own affairs. On June 17

he left London for Scotland, where he was received with apparently unabated warmth. Speaking in Edinburgh, on the 21st, he said that the Land Purchase Bill was an offer to the Irish landlords; that they had not accepted it; and that, so far as he was concerned, it would not be renewed. On his return from Scotland he spoke at Manchester on the 25th, and, feeling it necessary to meet the general disapproval of separating the liability to be taxed from the right to vote, he assured his audience that, under the reconstructed Bill, Ireland would be heard in Parliament whenever her own interests were affected. The next day Parliament was formally dissolved, and on the 28th, in a final speech at Liverpool, he maintained it to be historically true that, in all great matters of policy, the classes had been wrong while the masses had been right. Let them, he said, do away with the one exception to the universal loyalty of the British Empire, which could not afford to have a Poland within it.

The result of the General Election was disastrous to Home Rule. There were returned 316 Conservatives, 78 Liberal Unionists, as those Liberals who left Mr. Gladstone called themselves, 191 Liberals who adhered to him, and 85 Parnellites as before. This gave the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists combined a working majority of 113.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PARNELLITE ALLIANCE.

ON July 20 the Cabinet met for the last time, and agreed to resign at once. The Queen sent for Lord Salisbury, who invited Lord Hartington to join him, and even offered to support a Liberal Unionist Administration. But the Liberal Unionists showed their disinterestedness by refusing office, and Lord Salisbury formed a purely Conservative Ministry. All idea of retirement seemed to have vanished from Gladstone's mind. He had been returned without opposition for Midlothian, and he at once resumed the lead of the Liberal Party. He and his followers entered into an open and avowed alliance with Mr. Parnell and the Irish Nationalists, for the purpose of carrying Home Rule. At the meeting of the new Parliament on August 5, Gladstone was in his place to second the re-election of Mr. Peel as Speaker. When the Address was moved, on the 19th, he expressed his firm and growing conviction in the soundness of his

own policy. He was extremely glad, he said, to find that the Government proposed no Coercion Bill, though, so far as he could see, there was more reason for one then than there had been in January. He concluded by entreating the Government not to delay the announcement of the manner in which they intended to deal with the Irish Question. Lord Randolph Churchill, who had become Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons, replied that Sir Redvers Buller would be sent to restore order in Kerry and the adjoining districts, where alone it was seriously disturbed, and that two Royal Commissions would be appointed—one upon the Irish land laws, and the other upon the best means for developing the material resources of Ireland. Mr. Parnell moved an amendment to the Address, calling for the revision of judicial rents on account of the fall in agricultural prices. For this Gladstone declined to vote, although he entreated the Government to take the matter up themselves.

Immediately after this second speech, Gladstone went for a short holiday to Bavaria, and visited at Munich his venerable friend Dr. Döllinger, the excommunicated leader of the Old Catholics. On the eve of his departure appeared an interesting pamphlet, in which he explained, among other

things, how he came to take up Home Rule. The first part of it, called the "History of an Idea," was autobiographical. He had never, he wrote, publicly condemned Home Rule in principle, nor pronounced it to be at variance with the Constitution. But not before 1885 had there been an unequivocal demand for it in Ireland. So long ago as 1874, in the time of Mr. Butt, he had recognized and acknowledged that Home Rule did not mean separation. In 1880 he had complimented Mr. Shaw upon the honourable and straightforward manner in which he had dealt with it; while in 1881, when he received the freedom of the City at the Guildhall, he had told the citizens of London that he should hail establishment of local government in Ireland with the greatest satisfaction and delight. Again, in 1882, he had made in the House of Commons a speech, which Mr. Plunket, without remonstrance from him, had declared to be an argument for Parliamentary inquiry into the subject. In the second part of his pamphlet, called "Lessons of the Elections," Gladstone analyzed the position of the majority. He pointed out that, while the proportion of Liberal Unionists to Liberals was, among the Peers, five-sixths, it was, among the working classes, no more than one-twentieth. He showed that Ireland, Scotland, and Wales were all

in favour of Home Rule, England alone being against it. Exaggerated apprehensions of the consequences to which the Land Purchase Bill would lead were, he believed, the real cause of his defeat, and that Bill was altogether dead. Finally he contended that Home Rule was, in its essence, a Conservative policy.

Gladstone returned from Bavaria in time to support Mr. Parnell's Land Bill, for which the Government found time, and of which the second reading was moved on September 20. This Bill proposed, in substance, that eviction should be suspended in Ireland on payment of one-half the current rent with arrears, and that leaseholders should be brought under the Act of 1881. In his speech for this Bill, Gladstone contended that by appointing a Royal Commission the Government had admitted the existence of the hardships which Mr. Parnell sought to redress. The Liberal Unionists, however, strongly opposed the Bill, the Government declined to accept it, and it was thrown out by a majority of 95. The immediate consequence of this vote was the Plan of Campaign, which was formed by Mr. Dillon, Mr. O'Brien, and others, in the month of October. The gist of this Plan, from which Mr. Parnell always held aloof, was that on any estate where reasonable reductions of rent were

refused, the tenants should pay what the landlord would not take into a common fund, and that trustees should keep it in their own hands until the landlord came to terms. On October 2, Gladstone received, at Hawarden, an Irish deputation, which conferred upon him the freedom of four towns. In reply he quoted O'Connell's phrase about the two islands being united by the golden link of the Crown, and repeated that Home Rule was opposed to separation. For himself, he said, he remained at the head of the Opposition only to carry Home Rule, and he would at any moment retire into private life if that would conduce to the success of the movement.

The year 1887 opened with an attempt to reconcile the conflicting elements of the Liberal Party, which came to be known as the Round Table Conference. Gladstone, who had been favourably impressed by a speech of Mr. Chamberlain's at Birmingham, just before the close of the previous year, wrote, on January 2, a public letter to Sir William Harcourt, in which he suggested that representatives of the Home Rulers and Liberal Unionists might meet and endeavour to remove the causes of difference between them. He was of opinion that there should be no concealment in the matter, and that the fact of the consultation

should be made generally known. Lord Hartington, without expressing disapproval of this proposal, declined himself to take part in the proceedings. But Mr. Chamberlain accepted the invitation, and it was agreed to meet at Sir William Harcourt's house. The Chairman was to be Lord Herschell. Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Morley were to attend on behalf of Gladstone, while the Unionist delegates were to be Mr. Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan. Mr. Chamberlain thought it would be better to postpone the consideration of Home Rule, and to take up other Irish subjects, on which there was more likelihood of harmony. But Gladstone was strongly in favour of dealing at once with the principal question, and this course was adopted. The Conference held its first meeting on January 13, and sat for three consecutive days, when it was adjourned till after the meeting of Parliament, apparently with every hope of coming to terms. But when it reassembled, on February 14, the expected progress was not made. On February 25 there appeared, in a newspaper called *The Baptist,* a letter from Mr. Chamberlain, in which he asked why the Welsh people should have to wait for disestablishment and other reforms in deference to the disloyal Irish. This letter gave great offence to many Liberals, who regarded it

as inconsistent with the honourable truce to be observed while the Conference lasted. Mr. Chamberlain, however, declared that he was not the aggressor, and that he had been attacked before he replied. On March 9 he intimated to Sir William Harcourt that he should attend no more, and the Conference broke up. Sir George Trevelyan soon afterwards returned to the Liberal Party, but Mr. Chamberlain continued to act with the Liberal Unionists under Lord Hartington.

Meanwhile, on January 27, Parliament had met. Gladstone's first speech was an eloquent and touching tribute to his old friend and former secretary, the Earl of Iddesleigh, better known as Sir Stafford Northcote, whose death immediately followed his rather unceremonious removal from the Foreign Office. While fully acknowledging Lord Iddesleigh's sagacity and courage, Gladstone dwelt chiefly upon his sympathetic courtesy, and affirmed that gentleness was the foundation of his character. In the debate on the Address, Gladstone strongly supported the plea for economy made by Lord Randolph Churchill, who had resigned the Chancellorship of the Exchequer rather than assent to what he regarded as extravagant estimates for the Army and Navy. He also criticized the arrangement by which the Prime Minister was also Foreign Secretary,

declaring that the two duties could not be adequately discharged by one man. In reply to a challenge that he should say what he thought about the Plan of Campaign, he answered that, in his opinion, it was a direct consequence of the vote by which the House of Commons had rejected Mr. Parnell's Land Bill in the previous September. While not maintaining its legality, he compared it with the praiseworthy efforts made by the Chief Secretary, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, to exercise pressure upon the landlords within the law, which had themselves been condemned from the Bench as illegal by Chief Baron Palles.

On February 21, Mr. Smith, who had succeeded Lord Randolph Churchill as Leader of the House, moved the first of his new rules, which established the closure in a novel form. This rule provided that, instead of the Speaker declaring the evident sense of the House to be in favour of an immediate division, any member might move the closure, which was forthwith to be put unless the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees withheld his assent. Gladstone took the rather subtle objection that this plan would be less consistent than the old one, for which he himself was responsible, with the impartiality of the Chair. The motion was debated at great length, and was not finally adopted

till March 18. On the 17th, at a dinner of Yorkshire Liberals, Gladstone declared that Ireland blocked the way, and that until the obstacle was removed no other business could be done. On the 24th, when the Government demanded precedence for the Crimes Bill, he pointed out that the House did not know what the Bill was, and that they had had no Ministerial statement of the grounds for introducing it. He also dwelt upon what he called the grave and menacing policy of carrying coercion by closure. The motion was, however, adopted, and the Bill was brought in by Mr. Balfour, who had succeeded Sir Michael Hicks-Beach as Chief Secretary. It defined the offence of intimidation, commonly called boycotting, and made it triable by two resident magistrates, without a jury, who should have power to inflict a sentence of six months' imprisonment with hard labour. It enabled the Lord-Lieutenant to proclaim any association as illegal, and thereupon such association was to be dissolved. It differed from all similar measures in the past by fixing no date at which it was to come to an end. Gladstone vehemently attacked this permanent form of coercion, and also another proposal, which was subsequently abandoned, to try Irishmen in London for offences committed in Ireland. On April 19,

speaking at the Eighty Club, he described the Nationalists as the Constitutional Irish Party, and dissected the policy of the Liberal Unionists, which he called the "Grammar of Dissent." From this time forward he may be said to have entirely identified himself with the cause of Home Rule and with the Irish movement for obtaining it by Parliamentary means. Indeed, he seldom spoke at this period upon any other subject. But on April 25, in the debate on Mr. Goschen's first Budget, he renewed his protests against the wastefulness of grants-in-aid, and deprecated Mr. Goschen's interference with the Sinking Fund. At Singleton Abbey, on June 4, after expressing sympathy with the cause of Welsh Nationalism, he put forward another proposal for dealing with the Irish members in a Home Rule Bill. Reversing a suggestion made by Mr. Whitbread, he held that they might be excluded from Parliament for a time only, until they had established self-government on a sound footing. At Cardiff, on June 7, he appealed to the judgment of the civilized world as having been pronounced in favour of his policy. A month later, he moved the rejection of the Crimes Bill on the third reading, dwelling especially on the novelty of its form, and on the weakness of the case set up for it as compared with previous

statistics of Irish crime. Addressing his colleagues in the representation of Scotland at the National Liberal Club, on July 16, he expressed confidence that, whatever might be the final form of Home Rule adopted for the British Islands, Scotland would be able to hold her own.

As soon as the Crimes Bill had been passed, the Lord-Lieutenant proclaimed the National League to be an illegal association. On August 19, Gladstone moved an address to the Crown, praying that this proclamation should be rescinded. In his opinion the League was a legitimate combination, and there was a form of boycotting known in O'Connell's days as exclusive dealing, which, not being accompanied by force, ought not to be treated as a crime. He appealed to the testimony of Sir Redvers Buller, who had said that in some parts of Ireland the tenants regarded the League as their only friend. The Address was, however, rejected by 272 to 194.

During the recess, on October 4, Gladstone received at Hawarden a Liberal deputation from Kidderminster, and cited, as an instance of the effect produced in England by absolute government in Ireland, the domiciliary visit of the London police to a Socialist named Lyons, who had been asked, by the authority of Sir Charles Warren,

the Commissioner, whether he intended to speak at a Socialist meeting. Mr. Lyons was, he held, fully entitled to show the police the door. On the 18th, addressing the Liberal Conference at Nottingham, Gladstone attacked the Irish Government for their conduct at Mitchelstown. A meeting had been held at Mitchelstown and policemen were sent to it as reporters. They had not asked for admission, but endeavoured to force their way through the crowd to the platform. The result was a serious affray, in which two lives were lost; and a coroner's jury found a verdict of wilful murder against the chiefs of the police. The Government, however, persisted that the police had done no more than their duty, having fired in self-defence, and would not allow them even to be put upon their trial. The affair excited great indignation among Liberals, and "Remember Mitchelstown" became a popular cry. Speaking again at Nottingham, on the 19th, Gladstone, for the first time, gave his adhesion to the principle of one man one vote, and, in language bitterly denounced by his opponents, intimated that Scottish or Welsh disestablishment would have precedence according to the degree of support received from each country by Home Rule. On this occasion he was led into an unfortunate error, for which, after he had been threatened

with an action for libel, he apologized. He charged an Irish land agent, named Dopping, on information supplied to him, with having, during an eviction, pointed a rifle at a boy. Mr. Dopping proved that the rifle was unloaded, and therefore could have done no harm. It should be added that, as afterwards explained by Sir Charles Russell in the House of Commons, Gladstone had, under his advice, determined to omit the passage from the authorized version of his speech before there was any talk of a lawsuit.

At Derby, on October 20, Gladstone recommended a union of hearts as a substitute for a union of paper; and at Ripon, on the 25th, he affirmed himself to be simply a Liberal, repudiating with almost equal energy the two epithets of Separatist and Gladstonian. But while incessant in his attacks upon Irish administration, he did not always oppose the Government. On November 14, referring to the prohibition by the Home Secretary of a meeting summoned for Trafalgar Square, he said that if the Ministers of the Crown, under advice, declared the use of the Square for such a purpose not to be a legal right, their decision ought to be respected and obeyed. On December 28, Gladstone left England for Italy, and, speaking at Dover, strongly protested against the imprisonment

of Mr. Sullivan, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, for whose character he expressed the highest esteem. He returned from Italy on February 8, 1888, the day before the meeting of Parliament; and on the Address, in a conciliatory speech, assured the Government that he had no wish to renew the embittered combats of the previous year. He gave, however, a strong support to Mr. Parnell's amendment against Mr. Balfour's administration, referring at some length to the interview between Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Parnell, when the former was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. This interview, held in the summer of 1885, was strictly private, and known at the time only to Lord Salisbury. Lord Carnarvon, while admitting that he had consulted Mr. Parnell about the future government of Ireland, denied that he had any authority, either from the Prime Minister or from the Cabinet, to make any promise of Home Rule. Mr. Parnell, on the other hand, repeatedly declared in positive language that Lord Carnarvon, whom he understood to be representing the Government, had offered for his acceptance a scheme of Home Rule, with special power for the Irish Legislature to protect Irish manufactures. Proceeding to deal with the reduction of crime in Ireland, Gladstone said it was due not to penal laws, but to the Land

Act of 1887, which gave relief to leaseholders; and, in regard to the coercive policy of the Cabinet, he asked, "Is it wise, is it hopeful, is it conservative?"

When the remainder of the new rules, which had been dropped the previous session, were brought up, Gladstone supported the proposal that there should be a Standing Committee for Scotland. This was defeated; but such a committee was afterwards appointed under a Liberal Administration. On March 12 he expressed entire approval of Mr. Goschen's scheme for converting Consols from 3 per cent. to 2¾, and, ultimately, to 2½. On April 11, at the National Liberal Club, he called upon the Government, if they would not have Home Rule, at least to produce their Local Government Bill for Ireland. When the second reading of the Budget Bill was moved, on the 23rd, Gladstone proposed an amendment for equalizing the Succession Duty on real and personal property; but this was defeated by 310 to 217. The next day Mr. Justin M'Carthy moved the adjournment of the House in order to protest against the increase, on appeal, by the County Court judges in Ireland, of sentences passed under the Crimes Act by resident magistrates. Gladstone, premising that the right of appeal had been given in favour of the accused, denounced this practice as "mean

and miserable." Instances of similar acts were quoted from the time of Lord Spencer; but the protest was effective, and the practice was abandoned. On May 9, in receiving an address from Nonconformist ministers at the Memorial Hall, Gladstone pronounced the Government to be really responsible for the Plan of Campaign. In the House of Commons, on June 18, he had the melancholy duty of expressing the universal regret caused by the death of the Emperor Frederick, in whom, he said, there was a singular union of wisdom with virtue and with valour.

Supporting Mr. Morley's motion, on the 26th, against alleged abuses of the Crimes Act, Gladstone pleaded for the special treatment of political prisoners, and strongly condemned the indignity put upon Mr. Dillon by making him wear prison dress. On the 27th the Channel Tunnel Bill came up for second reading. Gladstone spoke in favour of it, making light of danger from France, and pointing out that Lord Palmerston's Government, which was said to have opposed the tunnel, merely declined to give a financial guarantee. But on this subject he did not carry the whole of his own party with him, and the Bill was rejected by 307 to 165. On June 30, speaking at Hampstead, Gladstone described the Plan of Campaign

as an evil, but a smaller evil than leaving people to die of starvation. On July 18, at a dinner given by Sir Wilfrid Lawson to the Liberal members for Northumberland and Westmorland, he dealt with the charges made by the *Times* against Mr. Parnell, which afterwards proved to be false. He argued that Mr. Parnell, as a member of the House of Commons, was entitled to the Parliamentary inquiry, for which he asked, into the authenticity of discreditable letters imputed to him, which he had denounced as forgeries. On August 20 he turned to the subject of political prisoners, pointing out that, of 85 Irish Nationalists in Parliament, 21 were in jail; and declared that even King Bomba distinguished politicians from felons. This was shown to be not strictly accurate; but Gladstone maintained that there were very few exceptions, and that, as a rule, the distinction was made even in the prisons of Naples nearly forty years before.

Gladstone was due at Wrexham on September 4 to address the Welsh Eisteddfod. He caused some dismay among the Welsh Conservatives by afterwards accepting an invitation to speak at a political meeting at the same place within a few hours. But he fulfilled both engagements, and told his supporters that the only example he had seen at

Naples of a political prisoner treated like a felon was Poerio, who had been convicted of high treason. At the Eisteddfod he dwelt on Shakespeare's fondness for Wales, which seems a harmless topic; but it did not save him from the accusation of fostering Welsh particularism. On November 5 he met the Liberal Two Thousand at Birmingham, and condemned Mr. Balfour as an absentee Minister. He concluded his speech with a fervent and eloquent prayer for the recovery of Mr. Bright, who was seriously, and, as it proved, fatally ill. On the 7th he spoke in Bingley Hall, and prescribed conciliation instead of coercion as the remedy for the state of Ireland.

On the 19th, Parliament met for an autumn session, and the Government introduced a Bill for extending the advances to Irish tenants under Lord Ashbourne's Purchase Act from five millions to ten. Gladstone opposed the Bill, on the double ground that it failed to deal with the urgent question of arrears, and that it would stand in the way of equitable arrangements between landlord and tenant. On this occasion two of his younger followers, Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Haldane, dissented from him, holding that the creation of a peasant proprietary was of the first importance for Ireland. The only other subject upon which Gladstone spoke during

these short sittings was the proposed expedition to Suakim, in discussing which he seconded Mr. Morley's protest against any attempt to conquer the Soudan, which, however, the Government disavowed. On December 15, at a meeting of London Liberals in Limehouse, Gladstone finally abandoned all hope of Liberal reunion. Liberal Unionists, he said, were now the most effective foes of the Liberal Party.

Parliament met on February 21, 1889, and, on March 1, Gladstone had an opportunity of reviewing the administration of Ireland, on an amendment to the Address, moved by Mr. Morley, which condemned it as oppressive and unjust, alienating the loyalty and impairing the rights of her Majesty's Irish subjects. Admitting that there had been a diminution of serious crime, Gladstone attributed it to the renewed hopes of the Irish people for the restoration of their self-government. On the other hand, there was no decline in legitimate combination, against which he argued that the so-called Crimes Act was really directed. The amendment was defeated by a majority of seventy-nine.

On March 27 in this year occurred the death of John Bright, whose condition had for some time been hopeless. All parties in the House of Commons, including the Irish Nationalists, joined in a

sympathetic eulogy of the great orator. But no speech was more impressive than Gladstone's. It was characteristic that he singled out, as worthy of special praise, the moral elevation of character which led Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden to sacrifice their popularity, and even the influence over public opinion which they so highly valued, by opposing what they regarded as the injustice of the wars with Russia and with China.

On April 4, Gladstone protested against the new policy by which the Navy Estimates, or rather, so much of them as were required for the proposed addition to the Navy, were spread over five years, thus destroying, or at all events diminishing, the annual control of the House of Commons upon expenditure, and increasing the power of the House of Lords. On April 9, following his usual practice, Gladstone refused to vote for Dr. Clark's abstract resolution in favour of Home Rule for Scotland. Returning to the subject of Ireland, he spoke, on May 6, about the arrest of Mr. Conybeare, a member of the House, and a young Irish gentleman named Harrison, for cheering prisoners in the custody of the Irish police. Reprobating this as a high-handed act of an abused authority, he said that the police were less to blame than the Ministers whose speeches encouraged them to such acts.

CHAPTER XXII.

PARNELLISM AND CRIME.

THE Parnell Commission had begun its sittings on October 17, 1888, but the interest in them did not reach the highest point till just before the meeting of Parliament, in February 1889, when Richard Pigott, who had forged the letters attributed by the *Times* to Mr. Parnell, broke down in the witness-box, confessed his crime, absconded, and committed suicide. The effect of this disclosure was immense, and Parnell became for a time a hero of the Liberal Party. On his first appearance during the session all the Liberals in the House rose to receive him. Lord Spencer congratulated him at a dinner of the Eighty Club; Mr. Morley attended a meeting in his company at St. James's Hall; and, on May 22, when the Women's Liberal Federation assembled in the Grosvenor Gallery, Gladstone took the opportunity of publicly shaking hands with him.

At this time Gladstone seldom spoke on other

than Irish subjects. But on May 28 he strongly protested in the House of Commons against the refusal of the Government to let the British Ambassador attend the centenary of the Revolution at Paris. This he called an error of judgment of a very gross kind, and just as unreasonable as if the French had declined to take part in celebrating the English Revolution of 1688.

Gladstone spent the Whitsuntide recess this year in making a political tour through the counties of Devon and Cornwall. Leaving London on June 5, he spent a few days with Sir William Harcourt in the New Forest, and on the 8th delivered a long speech at Weymouth. On this occasion he pointed out that foreigners habitually coupled the treatment of Ireland by England with the treatment of Poland by Russia; and he reminded his audience that one of the solemn undertakings given to Ireland at the time of the union was the promise of equal laws. Speaking on June 12, at St. Austell, he declared himself in favour of federal Home Rule for the United Kingdom, which came to be known by the cant phrase of Home Rule all round. Turning to the topic of Disestablishment, he pronounced that, as far as England was concerned, he could not expect to have anything to do with it; but he considered that, in Scotland and Wales, the question was ripe

for settlement, as in both countries there was an unequivocal majority in its favour. On this point he proclaimed himself a disciple of Lord Hartington, who had said, before the Liberal Party was divided by Home Rule, that the future of the Scottish Church must be determined by the Scottish people. On July 20 the freedom of Edinburgh was conferred upon Mr. Parnell. After the ceremony, Mr. Parnell addressed a meeting in the Corn Exchange, at which the Chairman, Lord Aberdeen, read a congratulatory letter from Gladstone. In this letter Gladstone described Mr. Parnell as a great conservative force, and declared that the Government were bringing the cause of law and order into discredit by their abuse of the one and their disturbance of the other.

On one important subject Gladstone found himself this year at variance with many of his most earnest supporters. The maturity of the Duke of Clarence, now 24, and the approaching marriage of Princess Louise of Wales, induced her Majesty to ask for an addition to the grants made by Parliament for the maintenance of the Royal Family. A Select Committee, of which Gladstone was a member, was appointed by the House of Commons to consider the Queen's message. In the Committee Gladstone proposed, and the Government agreed, that a quarterly payment of £9,000 should be made

to the Prince of Wales; that out of this he should provide for his own children, and that no further application should be made to Parliament. When, on July 25, Mr. Smith, as Leader of the House, moved the adoption of this report, it was opposed by the Radicals, including Mr. Morley and Sir Edward Grey, and Mr. Labouchere moved a hostile amendment to it. Gladstone, however, strongly supported the Government, and, in an eloquent speech, rapturously applauded by the Conservative party, pleaded for maintaining the British monarchy, not only with dignity, but with splendour. He carried with him the Irish vote. But the Radicals went into the other Lobby, and their relations with the Parnellites were severely strained.

On July 26, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone celebrated their golden wedding. They received an address from the National Liberal Club. But perhaps the most interesting part of the anniversary was the affectionate letter to Mrs. Gladstone from the venerable Cardinal Manning, who had been estranged from her husband by the controversy over the Vatican Decrees, but who was now a warm supporter of Home Rule for Ireland.

At the beginning of September 1889, Gladstone, always anxious to promote friendly relations with France, and vexed at what he considered the slight

put upon the French Government by Lord Salisbury, paid a week's visit to Paris with his wife. On the 7th he was entertained at dinner by a number of politicians, chiefly Free Traders, and in response to the toast of his health, proposed by M. Léon Say, delivered in French a cordial speech on the natural links between the two countries. His presence and his remarks met with a warm welcome from the French Press.

Gladstone's first speech in England during the recess was made at Hawarden on September 23, when he received a deputation from the Hyde Reform Club. On this occasion he caused some surprise by the extreme vigour with which he denounced the nationalization of the land, then rather popular with advanced Radicals. If, he said, the State took the land without paying for it, that would be robbery ; if they bought it, that would be folly. Gladstone had always taken a most sympathetic interest in the affairs of Italy. But he could not approve of the ambitious policy in which, under Signor Crispi, she had indulged ; and in the *Contemporary Review* for October, writing under the name of "Outidanos," or "A man of no account," he implored her to be on her guard against excessive armaments, to avoid alliance with Austria, and to discard her jealousy of France.

This article provoked a spirited reply from Signor Crispi, who persisted in his policy, with results that all the world knows. On October 23, speaking at Southport, Gladstone referred to the atrocities committed by the Turks in Crete and in Armenia, which, he said, promised to rival the worst horrors of Bulgaria. Dwelling upon the great power of combination among workmen, as shown in the recent and successful strike of dock labourers in London, he declared that what was lawful in England would be criminal in Ireland. On December 2 he attended at Manchester the annual meeting of the National Liberal Federation, and urged the necessity of completing local government by the establishment of district and parish councils. In a second speech, made also at Manchester, on the following day, he accused the Liberal Unionists of having prevented the Conservatives from taking up Home Rule, and protested against the promotion of Mr. Peter O'Brien, who had been conspicuous as a jury-packer, to be Lord Chief Justice of Ireland. Towards the end of this year, Mr. Parnell spent some days as a guest at Hawarden.

On January 9, 1890, Gladstone devoted his annual speech at the dinner of the Hawarden tenants to the decay of the agricultural population, which he pronounced to be a great evil, both for

the rural districts and for the towns. His first political speech for the year was made in January 22 at Chester, when he gave his celebrated definitions of Liberal and Conservative principles. "Liberalism," he said, "was 'trust in the people, qualified by prudence;' Conservatism was 'distrust of the people, qualified by fear.'"

On January 31, Gladstone, availing himself of his position as an Honorary Fellow, went into residence for a few days at All Souls', where he astonished and amused the Common Room by the intensity of his academic conservatism. On February 5, just before his return to London, he addressed the Oxford Union, of which he had been President sixty years before, on the connection between Assyrian discoveries and the text of Homer. In reply to a vote of thanks, proposed by Archdeacon Palmer, Lord Selborne's brother, he declared his deep and undying affection for his old university.

The first business at the opening of the session, on February 11, was the consideration of the report made by the three judges who had tried the issues between the Irish Nationalists and the *Times*. The judges had acquitted the Irish members of complicity in crime, and had stigmatized as forgeries the letters alleged to have been written by Mr. Parnell. But they found that the defendants had

engaged in a conspiracy for the expulsion of the landlords, under the name of the "English Garrison," had encouraged intimidation, and had persisted in the advocacy of boycotting, although they knew that it led to violence. Both parties were therefore unable to claim a victory, although the most serious of the personal charges were dismissed. Before, however, the report was considered, Sir William Harcourt moved, with Gladstone's approval, that the *Times* had committed a breach of privilege in publishing, on April 18, 1887, the day arranged for the division on the second reading of the Crimes Bill, the first of the forged letters with Mr. Parnell's signature attached to it. This motion having been rejected by 260 to 212, and the Address having been agreed to, Mr. Smith, on March 3, moved a simple resolution of thanks to the judges. To this Gladstone proposed an amendment denouncing a resort to the weapons of calumny and forgery, and calling upon the House to condemn the "flagrant iniquity" of the attacks upon Mr. Parnell's character. He severely criticized some parts of the report, describing it as "a disproportioned and ill-balanced judgment." At the close of a singularly powerful speech, which provoked applause from both sides of the House, he made an impassioned appeal to the consciences of Conservative members. He implored

them in the most solemn language to disregard on this occasion the ties of party, and to consider, as individuals, as gentlemen, as Christians, the reparation rightfully due to a man who, whatever they might think of his politics, had suffered for years a grievous wrong. If a division had been immediately taken, the result might have been different from what it was. But the debate was prolonged for a week, and ended, on March 10, in the defeat of the amendment by numbers which almost exactly represented the balance of parties in the House of Commons.

On April 24, Gladstone spoke against Mr. Balfour's Land Purchase Bill, a great enlargement and extension of the Ashbourne Acts, on four specific grounds. First, he said, the Irish Nationalists were opposed to it; secondly, the principle had been condemned in the case of his own Bill at the General Election; thirdly, it was inexpedient to put the State in the place of a landlord; and, fourthly, the voluntary character of the measure meant really the option of the landowner, who, by the weapon of unpaid arrears, could force the tenant to buy. The second reading was, however, carried by 348 to 268. On May 2, Gladstone, for the first time, spoke and voted for disestablishing the Church of Scotland. On May 12, when the

Local Taxation Bill came up for second reading, Gladstone, supporting an amendment moved by Mr. Caine, condemned the proposal that County Councils should have the power of buying the goodwill of public-houses. He pointed out that the judges had decided against the right of a publican to the renewal of his licence, and argued that this measure, which he called a Public-house Endowment Bill, would give the publican, for the first time by statute, a right which he had not hitherto possessed. The second reading of the Bill was carried, but the licensing clauses were so stubbornly resisted in Committee, and the majorities of the Government sank so low, that it was ultimately dropped. On May 16, speaking at Norwich, Gladstone pointed out that one-third of the Ministerial majority had been destroyed by the bye-elections. In this and other speeches, as well as in articles contributed to magazines, he endeavoured to make electoral statistics into an exact science, and deduced from figures the inference that at the next General Election the Liberals would have a majority of 100.

The business of the Government had made such slow progress this year that the Prime Minister suggested a reform of Parliamentary procedure, which would enable Bills to be taken up in a new session at a point which they had reached

in the old. Mr. Smith gave notice of a standing order for this purpose. But at Gladstone's request he consented to the appointment of a Select Committee, in which Gladstone moved that it would be unconstitutional for one House of Parliament to postpone a measure which had been passed by the other. This proposal suggested so many difficulties that the Government did not persist in their standing order.

On July 7, in a debate on the Irish Estimates, Gladstone spoke with great indignation of the practice called "Shadowing," which Mr. Balfour had introduced into Ireland. He said it was an intolerable grievance that men should be followed by the police wherever they went, merely because the authorities chose to suspect them without any evidence. On this point Gladstone received a good deal of more or less articulate sympathy from his political opponents, and shadowing was condemned by a Parliamentary follower of the Government in most unparliamentary language. On July 24, Gladstone, ably seconded by Sir William Harcourt, raised a constitutional point which had escaped general notice. Lord Salisbury had made an agreement with Germany by which, in return for the abandonment of German claims over Zanzibar, the little island of Heligoland was ceded to the

German Empire. A Bill was introduced into Parliament for giving effect to this international arrangement. Gladstone, while not objecting to the substance of the treaty, complained that the Government, by making it a subject of legislation, had abandoned the treaty-making prerogative of the Crown. This seemed a strange argument to come from a Liberal. But the real significance of it was seen when Gladstone proceeded to show that the prerogative of the Crown, exercised by the Ministers of the day, was subject to review by the House of Commons, and by the House of Commons alone; whereas a Bill required the sanction of the House of Lords. The Government, however, proceeded with their Bill, and carried it, the Land Bill being reserved for an autumn session in November.

At the end of July, Gladstone was entertained by a number of Wesleyan Liberals at the National Liberal Club, and took the opportunity of criticizing the policy of Sir Lintorn Simmons's mission. Sir Lintorn Simmons had been sent to Rome to procure the assent of the Pope for Protestant marriages in Malta, and Gladstone declared with much vehemence that this was a distinct recognition by the British Government of Papal authority within the Queen's dominions.

In October, Gladstone, now in his eighty-first

year, entered upon a fresh Midlothian campaign. Speaking at Edinburgh, on the 21st, he called attention to the increasing number of derelict farms in Ireland, which, he said, proved that the policy of coercion had done nothing for the landlord. Irishmen, he added, were justified in hating the law, though nothing could justify them in breaking it. At West Calder, on the 22nd, he expressed disapproval of a general Eight Hours Bill; but admitted that the case of the miners was exceptional, and that there was much to be said for it as regarded them. At Dalkeith, on the 25th, he aroused great enthusiasm by the statement that, south of the Tweed, Church Defence meant Toryism. "I am," he said, "supposed to be a sort of Churchman myself, but they never asked me to join a Church Defence Society." Speaking again at Edinburgh, on the 27th, he denied having said that it passed the wit of man to provide for Irish representation at Westminster under a Home Rule Bill. What he had said was that no such scheme could be framed which was not open to objections. But these objections might be overcome, and the Liberal Party had, he feared, plenty of time before them. Then and always, though pressed not only by opponents but by some of his followers, such as Mr. Asquith, he consistently refused to

say what changes he would make in his Home Rule Bill, if he had another opportunity of introducing it. He would not go beyond a general assurance that the Irish members were not to be entirely excluded from Parliament. On October 29 he received the freedom of Dundee, and addressing an audience of both political parties, dealt with the new M'Kinley tariff in the United States, pointing out that, though apparently unfavourable to British traders, it was indirectly advantageous to them, because, by raising American prices, it hampered American competition in neutral markets.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FALL OF PARNELL.

AT this time the prospects of the Liberal Party were highly favourable. The by-elections were going against the Government, and many Conservatives were beginning to doubt the wisdom of Mr. Balfour's policy in Ireland. But in November there came a great and sudden change. A personal and apparently immaterial event produced a revolution of public feeling, for which it would be difficult to find a parallel in the history of English politics. Mr. Parnell had been made co-respondent in a divorce case. He did not appear in the witness-box to deny the charge upon oath, and on November 17 judgment was given against him. On November 20 the National Liberal Conference held its annual meeting at Sheffield. It was attended by Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Morley. No public reference was made to Mr. Parnell in the course of the proceedings. But on their return to London the two Liberal leaders informed their Chief that,

in the unanimous opinion of the Liberal delegates, the continuance of Mr. Parnell at the head of the Nationalist Party would mean the abandonment of Home Rule by English Liberals. This was called the revolt of the Nonconformist conscience, though it is certain that a large proportion of the delegates were Churchmen.

On November 24, Gladstone wrote a letter to Mr. Morley, which was to be shown to Mr. Parnell and to Mr. Justin M'Carthy, but not to the other Irish Nationalists, if Mr. Parnell voluntarily retired. Mr. M'Carthy failed to communicate with Mr. Parnell, who was, on the 25th, the day of the meeting of Parliament, unanimously re-elected chairman by his colleagues. At the time of the re-election the letter was not known to the Irish members. It was immediately afterwards published. It contained the expression of Gladstone's view that, if Mr. Parnell remained where he was, many friends of Home Rule would be estranged, and Gladstone's own leadership would be made "almost a nullity." On November 29, Parnell replied in a manifesto, which informed the Irish people that he was being thrown to the "English wolves." He went on to assure them that when he stayed at Hawarden in December 1889, Gladstone told him what the next Home Rule Bill would be. The Irish members

were to be reduced in number to thirty-four, and the Imperial Parliament was to have exclusive control over the question of Irish land. The judges and the police were also to be withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Irish Legislature. Mr. Parnell added that, on November 10, 1890, Mr. Morley had offered him the Chief Secretaryship for Ireland, and had asked whether another Irish member could not be appointed a law officer of the Crown. Those proposals he declared that he had refused; and he added that Irish Nationalists were now independent of all English parties. These statements Gladstone immediately and totally denied. He said that in his confidential talk with Mr. Parnell at Hawarden he had merely exchanged ideas. He had made no definite proposals, and had never even mentioned the particulars which Mr. Parnell detailed. All that passed between them he had in confidence communicated to his colleagues in the late Government. Mr. Morley, for his part, positively contradicted the assertion that he had invited Mr. Parnell to be Chief Secretary in a Liberal Administration. He had merely asked Mr. Parnell whether the refusal of the Irish members to take office in a British Government was to be regarded as final, and Parnell had answered that it was.

In consequence of Gladstone's letter a second

meeting of the Irish Party was held on December 1, at one of the Committee-rooms of the House of Commons, and Parnell was called upon to resign. He said he would do so if Gladstone gave an assurance that Ireland should be allowed to manage her own police and legislate for her own land. Gladstone refused to give any pledge, or to go beyond an intimation that no Home Rule Bill could be carried or ought to be proposed which did not meet with the general concurrence of the Irish people. After a prolonged and acrimonious discussion, during which Parnell, as chairman, succeeded in postponing, upon technical grounds, a direct vote, a majority of those present, being forty-five, withdrew to another room, deposed Parnell from the leadership, and elected Mr. M'Carthy as sessional chairman. This animated struggle diverted attention from the regular proceedings of Parliament, and Mr. Balfour's Land Purchase Bill, though unfavourably criticized by Gladstone, was read a second time without serious opposition. It became law the following year.

On January 27, 1891, the House of Commons performed a tardy act of justice. Upon the motion of Mr. Hunter, member for North Aberdeen, who was supported by Gladstone, the House unanimously expunged the resolution passed on June 22,

1880, which contravened the right of Mr. Bradlaugh to take the Parliamentary oath. Mr. Bradlaugh was then dying, and it is doubtful whether he knew what was done. He had, by universal consent, been an excellent member of Parliament, and had himself carried an Act which enabled those who disapproved of oaths to make an affirmation of their allegiance. Gladstone alluded to this long controversy, and to its final result, when, on February 4, in one of his most eloquent speeches, he moved the second reading of the Religious Disqualification Removal Bill. The object of this measure was to relieve Catholics from their disqualification for the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland and the Lord Chancellorship of England, the only offices still denied to them. Gladstone pointed out that a Roman Catholic, Mr. Matthews, was at that time Home Secretary, and that the Woolsack, with all the ecclesiastical patronage which it involved, might be occupied by a Mohammedan, a Buddhist, an Agnostic, or an Atheist. The Government, however, opposed the Bill. It was nicknamed a Ripon and Russell Relief Bill, and rejected by 256 votes to 223.

A few days afterwards, in supporting Mr. Morley's annual vote of censure upon the Irish Administration, which was rejected by the usual majority,

Gladstone charged the Government with fostering sympathy for those who broke the law. It was observed that in this division all the Irish Nationalists, despite their differences, voted together. On February 20 a motion in favour of Welsh Disestablishment, for which Gladstone spoke, describing the Welsh Church as the Church of the few and the rich, was only rejected by the narrow majority of thirty-two. Mr. Chamberlain and several of his political friends voted for the motion. On March 3, Gladstone both voted and spoke for Mr. Stansfeld's motion in favour of one man one vote, and the reduction of the qualifying period from twelve months to three. The plural vote was, he said, a "lottery," and not a real representation even of wealth; but on this occasion the Government had a majority of more than 100.

Gladstone took very little part in the debates of 1891. Most of his speeches were made outside Parliament, and were directed to the constituencies. On March 14, however, he visited Eton, and lectured to the boys, or such of them as were members of the Literary Society, on the Homeric conception of Artemis. In the course of this interesting address he mentioned that it was Dr. Pusey, also an Eton man, who first excited his interest in the gods and goddesses of Homer.

Five days afterwards he returned to politics, and, in a speech at Hastings, criticized the financial policy of the Government, as illustrated by the Naval Defence Act. This Act, he said, stereotyped the naval expenditure of the country to the amount of £1,400,000 a year for seven years, and gave the House of Lords a control over public expenditure to which it was not entitled. Moreover, he continued, it was absurd to determine the nature of ships to be built seven years hence, inasmuch as their fashion changed as rapidly as the fashion of ladies' bonnets. In the month of April there were a number of by-elections, which were regarded as omens of the future; and Gladstone, in a letter to the Liberal candidate for Woodstock, which was the first of these constituencies to poll, attacked the Government for not having redeemed the pledge to introduce an Irish Local Government Bill, given five years before. Mr. Balfour attempted, though unsuccessfully, to fulfil this promise in 1892.

On October 2, Gladstone attended the meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Newcastle, and gave his support to the Newcastle programme, which, for the next four years, was the platform of the Liberal Party. Putting Home Rule first, he added to it the Disestablishment of the Welsh and Scottish Churches, local veto, one man one

vote, the payment of election expenses from public funds, and the establishment of parish councils. He declared that if the House of Lords were to throw out a Home Rule Bill passed by the House of Commons, it would become a dangerous power between the Throne and the people. As regarded the payment of members, he would have confined it to those who had been taken from the working classes. But this distinction was unpalatable to the trade unions, and was afterwards dropped. On December 10 a conference of villagers was held at the Memorial Hall, in Farringdon Street, and the next morning Gladstone met the delegates at breakfast in the Holborn Restaurant, when he spoke on parish councils and allotments, and the division of rates between owner and occupier. The Government had carried an Allotments Act, but it was argued by the Opposition that the powers of acquiring land under it were too expensive and complicated to be practically useful.

The session of 1892 was, if possible, tamer than the session of 1891, and Gladstone took little more part in the second than he had in the first. When the second reading of the Women's Franchise Bill was moved, on April 22, Mr. Samuel Smith, who proposed its rejection, read a letter from Gladstone against the principle of the Bill. He objected to

it, in the first place, because it only enfranchised unmarried women. But going beyond this point, which could easily have been altered, he contended that if women had votes they must have seats; and that if they were eligible for seats they must be qualified for office; and, in short, used the argument, so common in Tory mouths, which is known as the thin edge of the wedge. The Bill was rejected by the small majority of twenty-three. On April 28, Gladstone, speaking rather as a Churchman than as a politician, came to the assistance of the Government, and strongly supported the Clergy Discipline Bill, which provided facilities for removing immoral clergymen from their benefices. The Bill was opposed, and even obstructed, by Radical members, especially Radicals from Wales. But Gladstone implored the House of Commons to fulfil their duty to the parishes who sought relief from unsuitable ministers; and such was his zeal for the Bill that, for the only time in his life, he attended a Standing Committee to help in passing it.

A month later, on May 24, he once more appeared as leader of the Opposition, and delivered a vigorous speech against the second reading of Mr. Balfour's Local Government Bill for Ireland. He complained that Mr. Balfour, who had become Leader of the House on the death of Mr. Smith,

in October 1891, was putting off Ireland with a kind of local government inferior to what they had given to England and Scotland, and he dwelt with especial severity upon the proposal that two Irish judges should have power to dissolve a county council which had misconducted itself. The second reading of the Bill was carried by 339 votes to 247. But the ridicule excited by what was christened the "put them in the dock" clause proved fatal, and the Bill was withdrawn.

Addressing a meeting of Nonconformists at the Memorial Hall on May 31, Gladstone replied to a speech in which Lord Salisbury had declared that Ulster would be justified in forcibly resisting Home Rule. There were, he said, fools and rogues everywhere. But the Prime Minister's assumption that sober and respectable citizens in Ulster would resist the law of Parliament was an unmerited slur upon their loyalty and good sense. The Ulster Convention, held in the following month at Belfast, did, however, express sentiments very like those which Lord Salisbury imputed to them; and on June 18 Gladstone, who had been invited to meet some Nonconformist ministers at Dr. Guinness Rogers's house in Clapham, did his best to allay the fears of Ulster Protestants. The power of Rome was, he thought, exaggerated in their minds,

and he pointed out that the Papal rescript against the Plan of Campaign had had little or no effect in Ireland. At the same time, he acknowledged that the language of Ulstermen was more moderate than that of Lord Salisbury; and in reply to the question why Ulster could not have separate treatment in a Home Rule Bill, he said the reason was that Ulster herself repudiated it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GLADSTONE'S LAST GOVERNMENT.

THE Parliament of 1886 was now well advanced in its seventh year, and a dissolution was known to be impending. The actual date was June 29. But most election addresses, including Gladstone's, which was dated the 24th, had been issued before that time. It was in view of an immediate appeal to the country that the London Trades Council came on a deputation to Gladstone, and asked him to take up the question of a legal eight hours day. This was on June 16. Gladstone's reply was a refusal. He said that Ireland had the first claim upon him, and that he could not at his age embark upon great changes such as the deputation desired. He had striven his utmost for the working classes, and in proof of this proposition he said, "I appeal to my life."

Gladstone's address contained no information about a future Home Rule Bill, and is chiefly remarkable for having been written, as it says, in the

sixty-fifth year of his political life, when he could not expect to face another General Election. The day after it was written, June 25, he went to Chester to speak at a Liberal meeting. On his way he was struck in the eye with a hard piece of gingerbread, which gave him great pain and inflicted rather serious injury. The identity of the thrower, a woman, was discovered by the police, but Gladstone declined to prosecute her. In spite of the pain, he made his speech, and announced that if the Lords threw out a Home Rule Bill he should not regard it as a proper ground for dissolving Parliament.

On June 30 he spoke with all his old energy at the Music Hall in Edinburgh, and afterwards made a succession of speeches at Glasgow and elsewhere. But he did not satisfy public curiosity about his intentions, and the enthusiasm of Scotland for him was perceptibly diminished. His own majority in Midlothian sank from more than 4,000 to less than 700. His opponent, General Wauchope, who afterwards fell at Magersfontein, was one of the most popular men in Scotland, and had been diligently nursing the constituency for years. But nothing could explain away a reduction so enormous. The result of the election was the return of 355 Liberals, including Irish Nationalists, and of 315 Conservatives, including Liberal Unionists, who suffered

more severely than any other party. This gave a majority of forty for Gladstone and Home Rule. The Government, exercising their undoubted right, determined not to resign, but to meet the new Parliament on August 4. On August 8 the Queen's Speech was read, and Mr. Asquith, on behalf of the Opposition, moved as an amendment a direct vote of no confidence in the Ministry. This was seconded by Mr. Burt, the oldest of the Labour members, and carried, on August 11, by 350 votes against 310. Gladstone spoke on the second night of the debate, but declined to say what he would do if he were the head of a Liberal Government, which must still be regarded as a "nebulous hypothesis." He expressed, however, an opinion that the Coercion Act of 1887 should be repealed, and intimated that he would not resign office if the Home Rule Bill were rejected by the House of Lords. In conclusion, he said that the question of Ireland was to him, personally, almost everything, and that he remained in public life to settle it. After the division the Government at once resigned, and on August 15 Gladstone accepted office as First Lord of the Treasury and Lord Privy Seal.

Never was a Government formed under greater difficulties. The Prime Minister was eighty-two, and though his strength was unabated, the infirmities

of age were creeping upon him. His majority was entirely dependent upon the Irish vote, and the Irish party itself had not been reunited by the death of Mr. Parnell, in October 1891. Some of the Liberal leaders, including Lord Rosebery, returned to office with great reluctance. But Gladstone felt that he had a duty which he ought not to decline, and that he must do what he could to carry Home Rule. He strengthened his Administration by including in it some young Liberals of distinguished promise. Mr. Asquith became Home Secretary; Mr. Arthur Acland, Minister of Education, with a seat in the Cabinet; and Sir Edward Grey, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Gladstone's first speech, as Prime Minister for the fourth time, was made at Carmarthen, on September 12, when he dealt chiefly with the principle of religious equality as applicable to Wales. There was no autumn session, but a good deal was done by Ministers themselves before Parliament met. On September 26, Mr. Morley announced, in a letter to Mr. M'Carthy, the appointment of a commission to consider the best means of restoring the evicted tenants in Ireland. On September 29 the Cabinet was unexpectedly summoned, and it was soon afterwards announced by Lord Rosebery, as Foreign Secretary, that the Government would hold them-



[*Photo by R. Banks.*

ST. DEINIOL'S LIBRARY, HAWARDEN.

selves responsible for the administration of Uganda, which the East Africa Company had been compelled to relinquish. On October 19, Mr. Asquith disposed of the troublesome questions which had arisen out of the claim to hold public meetings in Trafalgar Square, by deciding, in consultation with the First Commissioner of Works, that they might be held on Sundays, and Saturday afternoons, when they could not interfere with the traffic.

Gladstone's utterances during the remainder of this year were not political. On October 24 he delivered the first Romanes Lecture at Oxford, and chose for his subject the history of Universities, which he had carefully, if not exhaustively, studied. On December 3 he received, not too soon, the freedom of Liverpool, his native town, and gave some picturesque recollections of Liverpool as he first knew it. Perhaps the most interesting of these, to practical politicians, was the fact that the Liverpool merchants had returned Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson, from 1812 to 1830, free of all expense. A remarkable feature of Gladstone's fourth Administration was a new rule, afterwards cancelled by Lord Salisbury, that no member of the Cabinet should be a director of any public company. During the autumn Gladstone intimated to M. Waddington, the French Ambassador in London, his willingness

to discuss with the French Government the British occupation of Egypt. But Lord Rosebery, as Foreign Secretary, demurred, and the proposal came to nothing.

Parliament did not meet in 1893 till January 31, after which it sat in every month throughout the year except October. Two Ministerial decisions of some importance were, however, announced before the day of meeting. On January 21 it was officially stated that two Irish political prisoners, Egan and Callan, had been released. There had always been a doubt whether Egan, though duly convicted of a criminal conspiracy in which dynamite was employed, had himself been actually concerned in the use of that explosive. Callan's discharge had been ordered by Mr. Matthews before he left office, for reasons which were never explained in public. On January 24, Mr. Mundella, the President of the Board of Trade, told a deputation that he had decided to form a Labour Department of the Board, and to publish officially a *Labour Gazette*, for the spread of industrial statistics. Both these reforms were permanently adopted.

The Queen's Speech contained a paragraph to the effect that recent events in Egypt had made it necessary to increase the number of her Majesty's forces there. The reference was to the impulsive

conduct of the new Khedive, Abbas Pasha, a very young man, who had endeavoured to emancipate himself from the control of the British Resident, Sir Evelyn Baring, afterwards Lord Cromer. The paragraph added that the Khedive had reconsidered his position, and would in future follow Sir Evelyn Baring's advice. It was also announced that no changes of policy in Egypt were contemplated by the Government. Another paragraph informed Parliament that the Crimes Act would not be further enforced in Ireland. But the Government could not find time for the repeal of the Act, even if the House of Lords would have consented to such a course. In his speech on the Address, the Prime Minister stated that a Royal Commission would be appointed to consider the subject of the land laws in Wales.

On February 9 there was a rather serious conflict between the Home Secretary and the Irish members. Mr. Asquith peremptorily refused to release any more of the Irish dynamiters then in English prisons, or to treat them otherwise than as ordinary criminals. The Irish Nationalists voted against him in a body; but he was supported in his refusal by the Opposition. On February 11, Gladstone delivered a spirited speech against any interference with the landing of foreigners, even if they were

destitute, upon the shores of this country. But he conceded to Mr. Lowther, who had raised the question, an inquiry into the American system of partial exclusion.

Not till February 13 did Gladstone find an opportunity to introduce his second Home Rule Bill. It was substantially, though not in detail, the same as the first, with the great and important exception that the Irish members were for some purposes to have the power of voting in the Imperial Parliament. Their number was to be reduced from 103 to 80, and they were not to vote upon any purely British question; but upon a proposal that an English or Scottish measure should be extended to Ireland they would still be entitled to do so. The Opposition did not divide against the first reading of the Bill.

But with the Welsh Suspensory Bill, which Mr. Asquith introduced on February 23, they took a different course, and its introduction was only permitted by 301 votes to 245. This was intended to be the first step towards Welsh Disestablishment. The object of the Bill, framed on the analogy of the Irish measure in 1868, was to suspend the right of ecclesiastical patronage in Wales until Parliament had dealt with the whole question of the Welsh Church. Replying to Lord Randolph Churchill's

taunt, that he only took up this subject for the sake of furthering Home Rule, Gladstone declared, with much energy, that he was equally ready to vote for Irish Home Rule and for Welsh Disestablishment. On the 28th, in resisting a proposal for the establishment of International Bimetallism, Gladstone made a speech which placed him for a time in a most unusual position, as the most popular man in the City of London. His main argument was neither more nor less than the stability of gold and the instability of silver. But although he did not discuss the matter from a severely scientific point of view, the speech is unrivalled as a plain statement, which every one can understand, of the case for monometallism. The motion was rejected by 229 votes to 148. On March 27, Gladstone called a meeting of his party at the Foreign Office, and addressed them with much earnestness on the backward state of public business. The second reading of the Home Rule Bill had not yet been moved, and little or no progress had been made with Supply. Governments with small majorities had, he said, often been long-lived, such as the second Administrations of Lord Melbourne and Lord Palmerston. But if he and his colleagues were to succeed in the gigantic task before them, they must be able to rely upon the self-sacrifice of their

followers, and to dispose of almost all the time available for public business. Before the second reading of the Home Rule Bill, moved on April 6, Gladstone was reminded of the serious difficulties with which he had to contend, by two important deputations, one from Belfast, and the other from the City of London. The first of these quoted figures to show that since the Bill was introduced there had been a marked depreciation in the value of Irish railways and banks. To this Gladstone answered that the panic which caused the fall was itself the result of political prejudice and groundless alarm. To show that commercial prosperity could exist under Home Rule, he cited the past instance of Grattan's Parliament, and the flourishing condition of Canada at the present time. The deputation from the City predicted that if Ireland were exempt from the control of the Imperial Parliament, her borrowing powers would be severely curtailed. Gladstone pointed out that the Corporation of Dublin, which was under Nationalist control, had raised its credit higher than it had ever stood before. And he added that, in spite of warnings from particular classes, he felt bound to carry out the wishes expressed by the majority of the United Kingdom.

At last, on April 6, Gladstone was able to move the second reading of his principal measure. In

doing so, he gave what he called a summary, and his opponents called a caricature, of the assumptions upon which resistance to the Bill was grounded. The Irish, he said, in the distorted vision of English Unionists, had, except in Ulster, "nothing human about them except the form." He vehemently protested against the hypothesis, which he declared to be contradicted by history, that Irishmen would not loyally carry out their obligations both to their own country and to Great Britain. He gave a long list of historical analogies to show that the union of a State was always promoted and not retarded by the autonomy of its component parts. And in defending the financial clauses of the Bill, he gave it as his opinion that Ireland had long paid to the Imperial Exchequer a sum greatly in excess of her material resources, as compared with those of England. In conclusion, he said that, if this Bill were rejected, the responsibility for the denial of justice to Ireland would lie upon the nation as a whole. The rejection of the Bill was moved by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, and the debate lasted till April 21, when Gladstone replied upon the whole of it. While maintaining that his original strictures upon the Land League in 1881 were justified by the excesses which it then countenanced, but had afterwards repudiated, he made the significant ad-

mission that without the Land League there would have been no Land Act. The second reading was carried by 347 votes to 304.

On May 3 the Eight Hours Bill for miners came before the House of Commons, and was read a second time. Gladstone supported the second reading. But he did so without much appearance of conviction, and he suggested that counties such as Durham and Northumberland, which objected to the Bill, should not be included in it. Before the Home Rule Bill went into Committee the House of Commons, by 295 votes to 240, passed a resolution inviting the Lord Chancellor to appoint magistrates for the counties, if necessary, without consulting the Lords-Lieutenant. Much complaint had been made by Liberals that, as most of the Lords-Lieutenant were Tories, Liberal politics excluded men from the Bench. Mr. Bryce, as Chancellor of the Duchy, had, on his own authority, appointed justices of the peace in Lancashire without a recommendation from Lord Sefton, the Lord-Lieutenant. But Lord Herschell, as Chancellor, declined to depart from established usage without a positive direction from the representatives of the people. In both cases the practice was reversed, and the old custom restored, by the next Government.

On May 8 began the discussion of the Home

Rule Bill in Committee. Gladstone himself took personal charge of it, assisted by Mr. Morley, as Chief Secretary, and by the law officers of the Crown in England. The Irish law officers had no seats in the House. History records no more marvellous example of physical and mental vigour in a man of 83. Twelve years before, Gladstone had surprised every one by the skill and success with which he had piloted the Irish Land Bill through a similar stage. But then all his faculties were fresh and vigorous, whereas now his hearing was grievously impaired. Yet he seldom left the House, he spoke on almost every amendment, and he developed resources of illustration as well as argument, which, if they did not always promote the rapid progress of the measure, excited the admiring wonder of the whole House. Not many changes were made, though, on May 16, the Government accepted an amendment from Sir Henry James, which expressly reserved the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. But the Bill was opposed with unexampled pertinacity, and it became evident that without some change of procedure it could not be passed within the limits of an ordinary session. The Chairman, Mr. Mellor, Gladstone's own choice, was too scrupulous to put the closure upon the whole or any part of a clause

whenever it would have shut out substantial amendments. This decision was not followed by his successor, and is difficult to reconcile with the terms of the rule. At length, on June 28, the Prime Minister announced that he would propose a motion for closure by compartments. On specific days, to be set forth in the resolution, the debate on fixed portions of the Bill would come to an end, and at ten o'clock the Chairman would, by order, proceed to put the remaining clauses of that portion from the Chair. On the 29th the resolution was moved by Gladstone, who quoted in its favour the precedent of the Crimes Act, passed by the same method in 1887. The motion was carried by a majority of thirty-two. On July 12, Gladstone made a concession to the majority of his English supporters by allowing the Irish members to vote, as at present, for all purposes whatsoever. But this was only carried by twenty-seven votes, and it gave the Conservatives a dangerous weapon for use at by-elections. Irishmen, they argued, would now be able to govern, not only Ireland, but England, Scotland, and Wales.

On July 27, the last day of Committee, a serious and unprecedented outbreak occurred in the House. Rising a little before ten o'clock, when the final clauses were to be put, Mr. Chamberlain delivered

a speech which, though highly aggressive and provocative, was not beyond the recognized limits of Parliamentary debate. But he excited the Irish members beyond their powers of self-control, and was greeted when he sat down with cries of "Judas." An English Conservative moved that these words should be taken down. The Chairman, not hearing him in the din, or not regarding his motion as in order, proceeded to put the question. Many Conservatives refused to leave the House for the division, and a few turbulent individuals engaged in physical conflict. The scene was naturally exaggerated by descriptive reporters, but it was universally regarded as disgraceful to the House, and it had some effect in quieting the passions excited by Home Rule. The Speaker was sent for, and though neither the Leader of the House nor the Leader of the Opposition, who had both gone out to vote, could tell him exactly what had occurred, his presence, his influence, and his dignity succeeded in procuring an almost instantaneous calm. The report of the Bill had, however, to be carried by a repetition of the same drastic methods, and even then it was not till August 30 that the third reading could be moved. In moving it, Gladstone reminded the House that eighty-two days had been spent upon the Bill, and maintained

that, in spite of what was called the gag, all its cardinal principles had been discussed. The opposition to the third reading was led by Mr. Courtney, and, on September 1, it finally passed the House of Commons by a majority of thirty-four, or nine less than had carried the second reading.

While the Bill was before the House little else could be done. But, on June 16, a resolution, supported by Gladstone, was unanimously adopted in favour of general arbitration with the United States. On June 30, Gladstone opposed the total stoppage of the Indian traffic in opium, but agreed to the appointment of a Royal Commission on the subject.

In the House of Lords, the second reading of the Home Rule Bill was moved, on September 5, by Lord Spencer. The Duke of Devonshire proposed its rejection, and, on September 8, it was rejected by an enormous majority. The contents were 41; the non-contents were 419. No step was taken by the Government in consequence of this vote, and the House of Commons proceeded with the business of Supply till September 21, when it adjourned till November 2, for an autumn sitting. On September 27, Gladstone spoke at Edinburgh, and in mysterious language, never fully explained, predicted that another session would not pass

without seeing Home Rule again appear upon the waves.

When the House of Commons met, on November 2, 1893, nothing more was heard of the Welsh Suspensory Bill; but the House proceeded to take up the Parish Councils Bill, which had only been introduced, and the Employers' Liability Bill, which had passed through the Standing Committee on Law. Several other subjects, however, came under the notice of the House. On November 9, Gladstone defended, against the criticisms of Mr. Labouchere, the war which the South Africa Company was making against Lobengula, the King of the Matabele. Mr. Labouchere obtained little support, and did not press his motion to a division. It was then generally believed that the war was necessary for the protection of the peaceful Mashonas against the warlike Matabele. But when the Matabele had been crushed, the Company proceeded to deal with the Mashonas, and eventually annexed the territories of both tribes.

During this autumn a general strike in the coal trade against a reduction of wages had spread to an alarming extent, and seriously threatened the whole manufacturing trade of the country. At last the Government, by the advice of Mr. Mundella, intervened, and, on November 13, Gladstone read

in the House of Commons a letter which he had sent to the representatives of both sides. In it he reminded them that the strike now entered upon its sixteenth week, without any prospect of a conclusion; and he suggested a friendly conference, with a member of the Cabinet, Lord Rosebery, in the chair. Lord Rosebery was not to sit as arbitrator, but merely to preside over the deliberations, and to bring the parties together if he could. The conference met at the Foreign Office on the 17th, and Lord Rosebery's good offices were successful. It was arranged that the men should return to work at the old rate of wages till February 1, 1894, and that, meanwhile, a permanent Board of Conciliation should be established. On November 27 the question of betterment, on the principle that all owners whose property was improved by municipal undertakings should contribute to the cost, came before the House. The Lords had struck out of the County Councils Improvement Bill the clauses which, for the first time, introduced this principle, and the Bill had consequently been dropped. The Lords then passed a resolution that a joint Committee of both Houses should be appointed to consider the question as a whole. Gladstone, on behalf of the Government, refused his assent to this proposal. The House of Commons, he said, had expressed

their opinion, and it was not for the House of Lords to suggest that they should change their minds.

Meanwhile, the Parish Councils Bill, which was in the hands of Mr. Fowler, had been read a second time and had got into Committee. It was making fairly satisfactory progress, when, on December 3, Mr. Fowler, supported by the Prime Minister, accepted a Radical amendment enabling parish councils to appoint a majority of the trustees in all local charities which were not ecclesiastical. This decision induced the Conservative Party to oppose the further stages of the Bill with great vehemence. The session had to be protracted over Christmas, and the Bill was not sent to the House of Lords till January 10, 1894.

On December 19 the state of the Navy was raised by Lord George Hamilton, who had been First Lord of the Admiralty, and who moved that the recent increase of Continental fleets called for a corresponding enlargement of our own. Gladstone regarded these tactics as unconstitutional, and himself proposed an amendment to the affect that it was the sole duty of her Majesty's Government to provide for the defence of the country at the proper time. He also argued in his speech that there was no danger either to the country or to

commerce, inasmuch as the Navy was equal to any two other navies combined. Lord George's motion was defeated by a majority of thirty-six. Public opinion, however, was not satisfied with the Prime Minister's assurance, and Lord Spencer soon afterwards added a considerable sum to the Navy Estimates for building new ships. But by that time Gladstone had ceased to be responsible for public affairs.

The House only adjourned for a few days at Christmas, meeting again on December 27. On the 29th an agreeable incident varied the course of polemical discussion. It was Gladstone's eighty-fourth birthday, and Mr. Balfour, on behalf of the Conservative Party, offered him congratulations, which he cordially acknowledged.

At the opening of the new year an important step was taken by the Government as an employer of labour. The Secretary for War, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, announced that the eight hours day, or, to speak more accurately, the forty-eight hours week, would be introduced into the Ordnance Factories as well as into the Dockyards. This experiment, though regarded with some suspicion at the time, was in every way successful. Early in January, Gladstone went for a short holiday to Biarritz, a favourite resort of his old age; and while

he was there, on January 31, the *Pall Mall Gazette* startled the world by an apparently authoritative statement that the Prime Minister had determined to resign. The significance of this paragraph was not diminished by the carefully qualified contradiction which it received. From Gladstone himself there came no word. But, in reply to inquiries, Sir Algernon West, an old friend and former secretary, who was staying with him at Biarritz, sent a long telegram, in which he denied that the Prime Minister had formed any such intention. Mr. Gladstone, he said, was ignorant of the turn which events might take, even during the present session. But his eyesight was giving him trouble, which added considerably to the burdens of office. He was, in fact, suffering from cataract, for which he afterwards underwent a successful operation. He returned, however, soon afterwards to London, where a conflict between the two Houses had produced a serious crisis. Mr. Asquith's Employers' Liability Bill, as it passed the House of Commons, abolished the doctrine of common employment, and made the master liable for injuries caused to one servant by the negligence of another. This principle was generally adopted. The controversy turned upon the question whether masters and servants should be allowed to contract themselves out of the Bill.

The House of Commons supported the Government in deciding that they should not; and this was the view of the trades unions. The House of Lords, taking up the cause of the voluntary insurance societies, which the directors of most railways declared that they would have to abandon if the Bill passed in its present form, introduced a clause for conditional contracting out; and to this amendment they resolutely adhered. The consequence of the deadlock was the loss of the Bill. Gladstone had intended to move, on February 20, that the Commons disagree with the Lords' amendment, and to take a division. But a technical difficulty arose. The Speaker ruled that, as the Lords had adhered without modification to an amendment rejected by the Commons, either the amendment must be accepted or the Bill must be dropped. Gladstone, therefore, could only move the withdrawal of the Bill, and this rather impotent conclusion deprived his speech of much of its force, as it deprived the division of all meaning. On March 1, however, he returned to the subject, in connection with the Parish Councils Bill, and took the opportunity of reviewing the whole history of the conflict. The Lords had, in Committee, so entirely altered this Bill, which established district as well as parish councils, that it was hardly recog-

nizable by its authors. The House of Commons refused to accept any important amendment made by the Lords. Lord Salisbury was for fighting the matter out, even at the risk of losing the Bill; but, as the Duke of Devonshire and the Liberal Unionists declined to follow him, he gave way. Most of the Lords' amendments were abandoned, and they adhered only to two. One of these altered the size of the parish entitled to a council from 200 to 300. The other left it with the Charity Commissioners to decide whether in each case a parish council should have control of charities. Rather than drop the Bill, Gladstone, on these two points, gave way. But he added that, in his opinion, the relations between the two Houses had become intolerably strained, and that the controversy must now go forward to its close. "For ourselves," he said, speaking of the Cabinet, "we take frankly, fully, and finally, the side of the House of Commons."

This declaration was enthusiastically applauded by his followers, very few of whom knew that it was his last speech, and, indeed, his last appearance, in an assembly where he had sat with scarcely a break for more than sixty years. From this and other speeches, it is reasonable to infer that Gladstone would have appealed to the country against

the Lords at that time if he had been able to conduct a political campaign, and if he had been supported by his colleagues; but his physical powers were exhausted. The marvellous energy which he had displayed in the summer, when the Home Rule Bill was before the House, deserted him when it had been disposed of, and the avenues of sense, as he pathetically said, were closing. On March 3, Parliament was prorogued after an unexampled session of thirteen months, to meet again for a new one on the 12th. But it met with another Prime Minister. On the day of the prorogation Gladstone resigned, and the Queen made no effort to retain his services. She at once sent for Lord Rosebery. Gladstone was not consulted upon the choice of his successor. The Queen, in strict accordance with the constitutional principle laid down in 1846 by Sir Robert Peel, acted upon her own initiative. The choice of Lord Rosebery, though agreeable to most of his colleagues, was due to the Crown, and to the Crown alone. It is characteristic of Gladstone's mental energy and versatility that on the very day of his retirement he completed his translation of Horace's "Odes." Horace has never been really translated into English. But among the many attempts to perform an apparently impossible task, Gladstone's holds a high place. It is scholarly,

lucid, and dignified. If it wants the lightness and ease which are part of Horace's inimitable charm, it preserves the beauty of the original, and it shows perfect appreciation of an author whose ideas, tastes, and thoughts were removed by an infinite distance from those of the translator.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CLOSING YEARS.

GLADSTONE'S involuntary retirement was received by all parties with respectful regret. Lord Salisbury, with an exquisite felicity, rare even in him, said that the country had lost the most brilliant intellect ever devoted to the service of the State since Parliamentary government began. On March 21, Gladstone, though he remained a member of Parliament till the dissolution of 1895, issued his farewell address to the electors of Midlothian. In this he made a dignified appeal to the masses of the people, in whose hands, he said, political power now rested. He warned them that they must be on their guard against the temptation to pursue their own selfish interests, which sometimes beset every portion of the community. For himself, he proclaimed his unalterable devotion to the cause of Home Rule; but his personal connection with it was at an end.

Writing, on July 7, to Sir John Cowan, the Chairman of the Liberal Association for Midlothian, he announced his definite retirement from public life. But he could not prevent the nation from eagerly scrutinizing all his published utterances, and a letter from him, which the Bishop of Chester, an advocate of the Gothenburg system, read at Aberdeen, on September 17, caused some dismay to the supporters of Local Option. Gladstone had been, at least nominally, responsible for the introduction of the Local Veto Bill. But in this letter, after pronouncing in favour of strong drink being sold for the public profit only, which is the Gothenburg system, he went on to stigmatize a mere limitation in the number of drink shops, "the idol of the public for the last twenty years," as little better than an imposture, if it claimed to be a perfect remedy.

The subject, however, which most interested him in his retirement was the persecution of the Armenian Christians by the Sultan of Turkey. On December 29, his eighty-fifth birthday, he received at Hawarden an Armenian deputation, and spoke with an eloquence worthy of his prime. Denouncing the recent massacres by Kurds in Armenia, who were undoubtedly instigated by the Porte, he said they were as bad as anything that

had happened in Bulgaria eighteen years before. He warned the Sultan that he was rushing on his own destruction, and he recalled the fact that, during his own lifetime, the Turkish Empire had been diminished by more than half. What was left of it, he exclaimed, was a disgrace to civilization and a curse to mankind.

On June 14, 1895, Gladstone went, in Sir Donald Currie's ship, the *Tantallon Castle*, to Hamburg, for the opening of the Baltic Canal, and, though not supposed to be a popular statesman in Germany, was received with great enthusiasm by the inhabitants. On June 18 the political world was startled by an announcement in the *Times* that he had cancelled his pair with Mr. Villiers. No authentic explanation of this step was given, and it was not of much political importance, as Mr. Villiers had long ceased to attend the House. But it was asserted, and not denied, that Gladstone considered the Bill for the disestablishment of the Welsh Church, then in Committee, to be unduly harsh in some of its provisions. After the dissolution of Parliament, on July 8, Gladstone, who took no part in the General Election, retired permanently to Hawarden, and occupied himself with the foundation of St. Deiniol's Library, intended for theological students. In the deed by which he

established the library, he expressed the opinion that theology should be studied in connection with history and philosophy. Its shelves, therefore, contain historical and philosophical books as well as works on divinity. He further explained that, though primarily intended for members of the Church of England, he wished it to be open to other Christian Churches, and even to those who were not Christians. But there is an honourable obligation upon all who avail themselves of it not to use it for merely secular purposes. Even in his eighty-sixth year Gladstone was still alive to the calls of humanity. The continuance of the Armenian massacres drew him from his repose, and at Chester, on August 6, he addressed a public meeting called to express horror at the conduct of the Sultan. The Duke of Westminster, an old political follower, who had been estranged from his chief by Home Rule, but who, like the Duke of Argyll, had been brought back to friendly alliance with him by this recent phase of the Eastern Question, was in the chair. Gladstone maintained that we had a right of interference under the Treaty of Paris, and that by the Anglo-Turkish Convention of 1878 we were not merely authorized but bound to protect the Asiatic subjects of the Porte. But moral considerations,

he said, had no weight at Constantinople. The word "ought" meant nothing there, the word "must" meant everything. He returned to the subject on December 17, in a public letter, which ironically described the six Great Powers of Europe as prostrating themselves at the feet of the impotent Sultan. In 1896 Gladstone took part in a curious discussion, which led to no practical result, upon the validity of Anglican Orders. Leo XIII. had issued an Encyclical that was interpreted by Gladstone and others as implying an intention to inquire into the possibility of an English clergyman being recognized as a priest by the Church of Rome. Impressed by the urbanity characteristic of the Pope, Gladstone, in a letter to Cardinal Rampolla, the Papal Secretary of State, reviewed the history of the subject, and earnestly pleaded for a recognition which he thought might be a first step to the reunion of Christendom. This letter was published, on June 1, by the Archbishop of York, and considerably astonished Gladstone's Nonconformist admirers, who did not realize that, little as he cared for Establishments, he believed in the absolute necessity of a Church. The dignity, gravity, earnestness, and courtesy of the letter were universally admired. But ordinary Protestants could not understand what the Pope

had to do with the Church of England, while his Holiness finally closed the discussion by intimating, with great politeness, that, for all Englishmen—clergymen and laity alike—the Church of Rome kept an open door. But those who entered it must do so upon the terms laid down by the Church, and not upon their own. Writing from Cannes, in March 1897, Gladstone expressed his disappointment with a plainness and vigour which recalled the old days of the Vatican Pamphlet. On June 26, 1896, the Prince of Wales was installed as Chancellor of the new Welsh University at Aberystwith. Among the recipients of honorary degrees were the Princess of Wales, who received a degree in music, and Gladstone, who was greeted with the utmost enthusiasm by the Welsh audience. At the end of August, the Sultan, taking advantage of an unimportant rising among the Armenians at Constantinople, ordered a general butchery of the Armenian residents in the city. This horrible crime, committed almost under the eyes of the Ambassadors of the Great Powers, who could do nothing to stop it, drew Gladstone once more into the political arena. On September 24 he spoke, with undiminished eloquence and power, to a mass meeting of 6,000 persons in Hengler's Circus at Liverpool. The meeting was composed of both

political parties, and the Lord Mayor, the Earl of Derby (a Conservative), presided. Gladstone suggested that the British Ambassador should be recalled from Constantinople, and that the Turkish Ambassador in London should be given his passports. The Sultan, he said, could not defy united Europe, and if England would undertake not to seek any personal advantage for herself, the Powers would not object even to her isolated interference. On the other hand, if they did, she would have done her duty, and could do no more. He followed up this argument in the *Nineteenth Century* for October, strongly urging that this country was under a moral obligation to intervene, and that if she did not discharge it, the word honour should be dropped from the language. The speech and article, though they had no visible effect upon the policy of Lord Salisbury's Government, produced a result which Gladstone could scarcely have anticipated. For they were among the reasons given by Lord Rosebery, in his valedictory speech at Edinburgh, for retiring from the leadership of the Liberal Party. Lord Rosebery intimated his dissent from Gladstone's proposals, which would, in his opinion, have led to a European war. This was on October 8, and on the 19th, at a meeting in St. James's Hall, with the Bishop of Rochester

in the chair, a letter from Gladstone was read replying to Lord Rosebery, though not by name. Premising that he desired not to attack the Government, but to strengthen Lord Salisbury's hands, he described the Sultan as the great assassin, and announced as a "wild paradox" the fear of war. During the year 1896 there appeared, in two instalments, Gladstone's contribution towards the study of Bishop Butler, to whose dry and bracing philosophy he had been devoted since his Oxford days.

Early in the year the Clarendon Press published his edition, in two volumes, of the "Analogy" and the "Sermons," with brief explanatory notes, a rearrangement of the text in paragraphs, and a complete index, which must have been a work of enormous labour. Soon afterwards there came out an additional volume called "Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler," in which Gladstone defended the Bishop against some of his modern critics, and entered at large into modern speculations on the immortality of the soul.

In 1897, though his published utterances were almost entirely confined to the new phase of the Eastern Question, Gladstone spoke at Hawarden, on May 4, in favour of the Bishop of St. Asaph's

Diocesan Fund; and at Queen's Ferry, on June 2, when the Victoria Jubilee Bridge was opened over the Dee. On March 13, in a letter to the Duke of Westminster, he paid an eloquent tribute to "the recent and marvellously gallant action of Greece," in going to the assistance of Crete. "She has made it impossible," he wrote, "to palter with this question as we paltered with the blood-stained question of Armenia. She has extricated it from the meshes of diplomacy, and placed it on the order of the day for definitive solution. I can remember no case in which so small a State has conferred so great a benefit." Greece, however, fell an easy prey to the superior discipline of the Turkish Army, and, on September 21, Gladstone summed up the previous two years of Eastern policy in the following words: "First, one hundred thousand Armenians slaughtered, with no security against repetition, and great profit to the Assassin. Secondly, Turkey stronger than at any time since the Crimean War. Thirdly, Greece weaker than at any time since she became a kingdom. Fourthly, all this due to the European Concert—that is, the mutual distrust and hatred of the Powers." Crete, however, was liberated from Turkey, and, after a period of government by European admirals, was placed under the control

of a Christian administrator, Prince George of Greece.

Gladstone's speech at Queen's Ferry, on June 2, was the last he delivered. In the summer of 1897 he suffered very acute pain, supposed at first to be neuralgia, and in November he went again to Cannes for the benefit of the southern sun. But he grew worse; and in February 1898 returned to England. At Bournemouth, on March 18, the doctors told him that the pain was due to a disease which must soon prove fatal, and on the 22nd he returned to Hawarden a dying man. The remaining weeks of his life were spent chiefly in religious devotion, fortified by the rites of the English Church; and early in the morning of Ascension Day (May 19) he died. Among the innumerable messages which he received during his last illness was a unanimous vote of sympathy passed by the Senate of Italy, the country to which, after the United Kingdom, his greatest services had been rendered. On the day of his death the House of Commons at once adjourned as a mark of respect to his memory. On May 20 an address was carried by both Houses for a public funeral and national monument in Westminster Abbey. On this occasion speeches were delivered upon Gladstone's character and career by the leading members of the House

of Lords and the House of Commons. The most interesting, because the most personal, was Lord Rosebery's. But Mr. Balfour's, which was read from manuscript, is careful, appreciative, and valuable to the historian.

On May 25, Gladstone's body was brought from Hawarden to London, and the coffin was placed in Westminster Hall. During the 26th and 27th the Hall was open to the public: an unbroken procession moved round the bier, and it was estimated that a quarter of a million people joined in it. On Saturday, May 28, Gladstone was buried in the Abbey, and laid in "Statesmen's Corner," where the public, appropriately enough, pass daily over his grave. Mrs. Gladstone was able to be present at the funeral, which was attended by both Houses of Parliament, though not in State. The Queen was represented by the Lord Steward, the Earl of Pembroke. The pall-bearers were the Prince of Wales and his son the Duke of York; Lord Salisbury, Lord Kimberley, Mr. Balfour, and Sir William Harcourt (the four leaders of the two Houses); Lord Rosebery, his immediate successor in the Premiership, and the Duke of Rutland, his former colleague in the representation of Newark; Lord Rendel and Mr. Armitstead, two of his most intimate friends. The Queen, writing





[*Photo by Barnard.*

THE GLADSTONE STATUE IN THE STRAND.

to Mrs. Gladstone, said: "I shall ever gratefully remember his devotion and zeal in all that concerned my personal welfare and that of my family." The ceremony was none the less impressive because, in obedience to Gladstone's wishes, it was conducted with the utmost simplicity and all possible avoidance of pomp.

Gladstone was for the greater part of his life a frequent, though irregular, contributor to reviews and magazines. Most of these contributions, except such as were avowedly controversial or purely classical, he republished through Mr. Murray, under the title of "Gleanings from Past Years." The seven volumes of the "Gleanings" appeared in 1879. An eighth and supplementary volume was printed in 1890. This collection of essays, ranging over forty years, and dealing with a great variety of subjects, contains much which is only interesting because Gladstone wrote it, some literary criticisms which have a permanent value, and a few constitutional essays of the highest possible importance. Several competent judges have expressed the opinion that Gladstone's article on Leopardi, in the *Quarterly Review* for March 1850, is the high-water mark of his critical capacity. It is a singularly interesting study of a strange, brilliant, and pathetic career. Count Giacomo Leopardi,

born in 1798, died in 1837, a year younger than Byron. He was subject to constitutional melancholy, and his life was a long disease. But in a time when classical scholarship was almost dead in Italy, he was amongst the profoundest scholars of the age. His poetry has been compared, for condensation, with Dante, and his prose, for lucidity, with Galileo's. It is characteristic of Gladstone that, while doing full justice in eloquent language to Leopardi's genius, at once precocious and mature, he devotes many pages to a refutation of the young poet's pessimistic paganism, and to an exposure of the mendacious narrative by which a Jesuit priest represented him as a tardy convert to the Church. Gladstone was always an ardent Tennysonian, and in October 1859, on the appearance of the "Idylls," he wrote for the *Quarterly Review* a comprehensive survey of the poems which Tennyson had then published, including "The Princess," "In Memoriam," and "Maud." Although the general tone of the article was laudatory, and even enthusiastic, Gladstone felt it his duty to protest against the glorification of war which he found in "Maud." But he recognized the unfairness of attributing to an author opinions dramatically expressed, and in a note, added twenty years afterwards, he admitted that he had done

less than justice to the poem. Tennyson, he said, with genuine insight, was the severest of his own critics, and he attributed to him, in common with Homer and Dante, the "power of purging out vulgarity from ideas ordinarily tinged with it." The *Quarterly Review* for July 1876 contains the fullest, fairest, and most original estimate passed upon Sir George Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay." Gladstone's personal acquaintance with Macaulay was slight; but they had been brought into friendly correspondence by Macaulay's review of Gladstone's first book, and they had sat together for many years in the House of Commons. Although the general account of Macaulay as a historian, politician, and man of letters, is appreciative and judicial, the portion of the article most distinctively Gladstonian is a powerful and ingenious argument to prove that Macaulay had in his history underrated the social position of the clergy.

Gladstone's constitutional essays consist of three articles upon three successive volumes of Sir Theodore Martin's "Life of the Prince Consort," and of one article in the *North American Review* called "Kin beyond Sea." The first chapter in what is really a Prime Minister's commentary upon the former half of the Queen's reign appeared in the *Contemporary Review* of June 1875, and was

signed "Etonensis." In it Gladstone contrasted the present powers of the British monarchy with those which it had wielded in the past, and described the change as the substitution of influence for authority. When the second volume of Sir Theodore's book appeared, Gladstone wrote a notice of it in the *Church Quarterly Review* for January 1877. In this he examined the constitutional doctrines of Baron Stockmar, who was on intimate terms with the Prince, and who endeavoured, rather crudely, to reconstruct the British Constitution on a German model. Gladstone passes over this enterprise with courteous irony, suggesting that the time had gone by for Bolingbroke's patriot king. But he takes the opportunity of pointing out what seemed to him really a dangerous innovation, in the fact that the House of Commons had taken upon itself to propose an increase of public expenditure. For, although it was still impossible that any private member should move an addition to the Estimates, he might commit the House to an abstract vote which would involve the outlay of millions. Exactly a year later, in January 1878, Gladstone contributed to the same periodical a review of Sir Theodore Martin's third volume. This instalment of the Prince's biography covers the period of the Crimean War, and there-

fore gave Gladstone an opportunity for putting on paper the doctrines he had repeatedly expressed in speeches—that the object of the campaign was to vindicate public law in Europe. Russia, he said, set herself in opposition to all the Great Powers. It was only because no material help could be obtained from Austria, and no help whatever from Prussia, that England and France were left to act on behalf of the whole Western continent. The third volume also gave Gladstone occasion for enforcing the views he always held on public economy, and for pointing out that the panics due to fear of invasion had become greater with the progress of extravagance. In "Kin beyond Sea" * Gladstone compares the British and American Constitutions. He begins by describing the United States as England's only commercial rival, and predicts for them the future primacy in commerce. The great obstacle to their achievement of it was, he thought, Protection. The chief interest of the article, however, lies in Gladstone's account of the Cabinet, which constitutional historians ignore, as an essential element in the working of the Constitution. The Cabinet on his testimony, than which none can be higher, stands between Parliament and the Crown as a necessary and sufficient

* *North American Review*, September 1878.

link. The function which the Cabinet performs for the Sovereign and the Legislature devolves upon the Prime Minister as a medium between the Sovereign and his colleagues. Whatever differances of opinion there may have been in the Cabinet, the Premier conveys to the Throne a uniform and collective judgment.

The best portrait of Gladstone was painted by Millais in 1879, and hangs in the National Gallery. It was sold by the first Duke of Westminster to Sir Charles Tennant, who gave it to the nation. Gladstone, though not tall, was above the middle height, broad-shouldered, but otherwise slight of figure, and muscular, with no superfluous flesh. He was gifted with an abundance of physical strength, and enjoyed throughout his life remarkably good health. His hair in his youth and the prime of his manhood was black. His complexion was pale, almost pallid, and an artist compared it with alabaster. His eyes were large, lustrous, and piercing; not quite black, but resembling agate in colour. His face, always handsome, acquired in old age an expression of singular dignity, majesty, and power. His voice, naturally musical and melodious, gained by practice an almost unexampled range of compass and variety. Scarcely any building was too large for it to fill, and at a

meeting in the open air it could be heard by many thousands with perfect ease. Yet he could modulate it at will, and even sink it to a whisper without ceasing to be audible. There were traces in its tone of his Lancashire origin, especially in the pronunciation of the word "sir," which he had so often to employ. But its marvellous richness always fell pleasantly on the ear. His manners were courteous, even ceremonious, and to women habitually deferential. He was a great stickler for social precedence, and would not go out of the room before a peer of his own creation. Bishops, and indeed all clergymen, he treated with peculiar respect. His temper, though quick, and, as he himself said, "vulnerable," was in private life almost invariably under perfect control. In Parliament he sometimes gave way to indignation, for his wrath was kindled by public causes, and not by anything petty or personal. His talk was copious, lucid, and full of phrases which stamped themselves upon the memory. He was earnest and eager in argument, tenacious of his proposition, but ready to hear anything which could be said against it. Hard to convince at the time, he often came round afterwards to the view of an opponent, and would then make the admission with the utmost candour. He was a good listener as well as a good talker,

and he had the instantaneous rapidity of perception supposed to be characteristic of great lawyers. His range of study, though it excluded physical science, was very wide, and his acquaintance with a subject was hardly ever superficial. He used to say that he had not a good verbal memory; but he was seldom guilty of a misquotation, and he retained in his mind with accuracy an enormous number of facts. No scholar in Europe had a more thorough knowledge of Homer, and few, even of Italians, were so well versed in Dante. He was an acute and learned theologian. The defect of his conversation was that he could not help being earnest on all subjects, and failed to see that his views on the making of violins were less interesting than his experience of government by Cabinet. In combined breadth and subtlety of intellect no statesman of his own, or perhaps of any, age surpassed him. He was equally at home in drawing up a great measure like the Irish Land Act of 1881, and in refining upon the point whether the retention of the Irish Members under Home Rule was a principle or an "organic detail." Sometimes his subtlety led him to draw sophistical distinctions. His minute and punctilious scrupulosity in the smallest things often led to charges of equivocation, and the very completeness with which

he defended himself against them produced a vague sense of distrust. Though himself the best abused man in England, his own judgments were uniformly charitable, and he was seldom heard to say anything harsh of a political opponent in private. It has sometimes been alleged that Gladstone had no humour. Such a broad and unqualified statement is certainly untrue. Irony is a form of humour, and of irony he was a master. But it is true that his sense of humour was fitful and capricious. Many forms of it did not appeal to him. With all his love of poetry he had a literal mind, and was too apt to assume that people meant exactly what they said. Lord Houghton once spoke of the humorists who had taken the chair at the Cobden Club "from Dickens down to Gladstone." Two of Gladstone's speeches may be mentioned which, read in cold blood at a great distance of time, would make anybody laugh. One is his satirical description of Lord Palmerston's attitude to Reform in 1859. The other is his reply to Mr. Chaplin's personal attack in 1877. Gladstone's favourite form of recreation was turning from one kind of mental employment to another. He was an omnivorous reader of ancient and modern languages, prose and poetry, history and biography, sermons and novels. In the "Temple

of Peace," as he called his ample library at Hawarden, he was always happy. As a young man he rode and shot, though he never became a sportsman. He cared little for games. Chess he thought too serious for an amusement, but he sometimes played whist with concentration. His favourite pastime of cutting down trees was begun in the woods of Clumber, which he inspected as the Duke of Newcastle's trustee. Till after seventy he was a great walker, and no stretch, however long, seemed to tire him. Wordsworth's plain living and high thinking was Gladstone's standard. His father left him a sufficient fortune, which exempted him from the necessity of adopting any other profession than politics. Hawarden Castle, his Welsh home, belonged to his wife's brother, Sir Stephen Glynne, and, after he died unmarried, to Mrs. Gladstone for her life. His habits were simple and domestic. He was a regular church-goer, even on week-days, and on Sundays he usually read the Lessons. He was frugal without being abstemious, but against luxury and ostentation he set his face. He spent a large proportion of his income on books, and gave away a still larger in charity. But he had enough of the commercial spirit to drive a good bargain, and was in all respects an excellent man of business. He was not, however, in the

ordinary sense, a man of the world. He approached moral questions rather as a clergyman than as a layman, and in dealing with individuals he wanted the tact which he displayed in dealing with assemblies. He had a bad memory for faces, and he did not always pay the personal attention which political followers of the less elevated kind expect. His power was over masses; and no one quite knows what he was who has not heard him address a great public meeting. Even in the House of Commons, though he almost always delighted it, and at times roused it to such enthusiasm as no one else could elicit, he often provoked antagonism which he might have avoided. He could not, as Disraeli said that Peel could, play upon the House like an old fiddle. Having entered public life a Tory and left it a Radical, Gladstone was naturally accused of being an "opportunist," or, in plain English, a time-server. Such an accusation is inconsistent with his whole character, except on the hypothesis that he was a conscious and deliberate hypocrite. It has been rather more plausibly contended that he had no fixed principles in politics. But, independently of other considerations, this theory ignores economy and finance, in which he never substantially changed. He was always in favour of peace and retrenchment. He had to be con-

verted to Reform. The great plunge of his life, the sudden, or seemingly sudden, adoption of Home Rule, he has himself explained. By arguments which to him were satisfactory, but which drew upon him the shaft of Mr. Lowell's wit ("life-long convictions to extemporize"), he showed that his opinions forced him to become a Home Ruler when five-sixths of the Irish people were so, and when Home Rule could be given without endangering the unity of the Empire. Whether it would endanger that unity was the great question, and there can be no doubt that Gladstone sincerely held it would not. The charge of precipitation is, from his point of view, no charge at all. Lord Randolph Churchill's phrase, "an old man in a hurry," was rough and rude in form, but in substance it was neither unfair nor untrue. It is really a variation of the Duke's fine saying that he had "no time not to do what was right." Gladstone himself confessed that he had been in a hurry for forty years. Prompt action in an emergency is no crime. Gladstone thought that a great national crisis had arisen, and that he at seventy-six must cope with it. He could not have expected that he would live to be eighty-eight. There was, at least, one sphere in which Gladstone's mind did not fluctuate. From the straight line of orthodox

Christianity he never swerved by the breadth of a hair. The Christian religion guided every day and every act of his life. He was, as Lord Salisbury said, after his death, "a great Christian man." As an orator, Gladstone's only contemporary rival was John Bright. But it is difficult to compare them. Gladstone was always speaking, and usually had to speak, whether he liked it or not. Bright could choose his own subject and his own time. Bright's style was simpler, and his English perhaps purer than Gladstone's; but his range was much narrower, he seldom argued, and he never debated. Gladstone was great in Parliament, great on a platform, great even in those occasional addresses on miscellaneous topics which are apt to drive the most paradoxical into platitude. There was no audience which he could not charm, none to which he did not instinctively adapt himself. His fault as an orator was a tendency to diffusiveness, and in particular to the employment of two words where one would do. But when he was pressed for time, no one could be terser, and his speeches of close reasoning or of pure exposition scarcely contain a superfluous syllable. His oratorical method and arrangement were borrowed from Peel. The fire, the energy, the enthusiasm, the fusion of reason and passion, the intense and glowing mind, were all his own.

As a financier, Gladstone can only be compared with Walpole, Pitt, and Peel. Walpole's great speech on the Peerage Bill has been coupled with Gladstone's speech on the taxation of charities as the best examples of abstract reasoning addressed to the House of Commons. Gladstone's first financial statement, made in 1853, shows that he had carefully studied the principles of Pitt's financial legislation. He was the pupil and disciple of Sir Robert Peel, whose labours in promoting the freedom of commerce he continued and completed. His intellectual supremacy was never more fully shown than in framing and carrying the Budgets of 1853, 1860, and 1861. Gladstone's principal defect as a statesman was that, with the two great exceptions of Italian independence and the rescue of Eastern Christians from the rule of the Porte, he paid no continuous attention to foreign affairs. He trusted too much to his old and tried friend Lord Granville, who, though able and tactful, was dilatory and procrastinating. A critic, even a friendly critic, might say of Gladstone that he tried to do too many things at a time. From 1886 to 1894 Home Rule absorbed him, and he considered almost every subject as it affected that great issue. But at other periods, even when he was Prime Minister, he occupied his scanty leisure with art,

with theological speculations, with literature, with historical research, and with practical philanthropy. In his zeal to reclaim the fallen, and to console the wretched, he did what no man of the world would have dared to do without fear of misconstruction, or even of scandal. Indeed, he did not know what fear was. As Lord Rosebery said of him, he was the bravest of the brave. During his second Government he was in serious danger of assassination. But the only thing which troubled and annoyed him was the discovery that he was under the special protection of the police. When his doctor told him, in 1894, that he had cataract, he desired him to operate then and there, that he might resume, as soon as possible, "the great gift of working vision." He loved popularity, having come to believe more and more as he advanced in years that the instincts of the people were, on broad questions, right, and their judgment in the long run sound. But in 1878 he set himself deliberately against a wave of public enthusiasm which he thought mistaken, with the result that he was hardly safe in the streets of London. No English statesman has been more fervently adored or more intensely hated than Gladstone. While his political admirers were extolling him to sympathetic crowds as equal or superior to the most

illustrious of the human race, he was being accused in anonymous letters of the foulest crimes. Even his religion, like the very different religion of Cromwell, was set down in some quarters as the basest hypocrisy. But his personal enemies, as distinguished from his political opponents, were men who did not know him. Of his personal friends, at different periods of his life, the most conspicuous were Arthur Hallam, Alfred Tennyson, Samuel Wilberforce, and John Morley. The immortal phrase of the Roman biographer cannot be applied to Gladstone. He was not "happy in the occasion of his death." The cause on which he bestowed the last years of his health and strength was submerged; the party which he had led was shattered in pieces. Peel broke up his party, but he carried Free Trade. Gladstone did not live to carry Home Rule. The list of his legislative achievements stops at 1885. But what a list it is! He reformed the tariff of his country; he was the real author of household suffrage; he gave Ireland religious equality and agrarian justice; he established the system of elementary education; he protected the voter by the ballot; he made the Army a national institution; he restored efficiency to the House of Commons; he gave the franchise to the agricultural labourer. He was a demagogue in the proper sense

of the term, a true leader of the people. He exhorted them always to employ the political freedom which he had so largely given them, less for their own material advancement than for the best and highest interests of mankind.

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